



















# HISTORY OF ROCKFORD









**THATCHER BLAKE**

[Germanicus Kent and Thatcher Blake were the first settlers of Rockford. They came from Galena in the summer of 1834]



HISTORY  
OF  
ROCKFORD  
AND  
WINNEBAGO COUNTY  
ILLINOIS

FROM THE FIRST SETTLEMENT IN 1834 TO THE CIVIL WAR

BY  
CHARLES A. CHURCH

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS FROM NEGATIVES TAKEN BY MEMBERS OF NEW ENGLAND  
SOCIETY, AND OTHERS

Published by the New England Society of Rockford, Ill.

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"Both justice and decency require that we should bestow on our forefathers  
an honorable remembrance."

THUCYDIDES.

TO THE MEMORY OF  
THE EARLY SETTLERS OF ROCKFORD

WHO FOUNDED THIS BEAUTIFUL CITY  
UPON THE NEW ENGLAND MODEL, AND GAVE TO IT THE  
BEST ELEMENTS OF CHRISTIAN CIVILIZATION,

THIS VOLUME IS RESPECTFULLY

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# CONTENTS

---

CHAP.	PAGE
I. GEOGRAPHICAL REVIEW . . . . .	1
II. GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY OF WINNEBAGO COUNTY . . . . .	6
III. THE MOUND-BUILDERS AND THE WINNEBAGO INDIANS . . . . .	10
IV. THE BLACK HAWK WAR . . . . .	16
V. STEPHEN MACK.—JOHN PHELPS.—JOSEPH KEMP . . . . .	22
VI. GERMANICUS KENT AND THATCHER BLAKE . . . . .	26
VII. PICTURESQUE ROCKFORD.—ITS FLORA AND FAUNA . . . . .	32
VIII. DANIEL SHAW HAIGHT.—OTHER SETTLERS OF 1835 . . . . .	35
IX. THE PIONEERS OF 1836 . . . . .	40
X. JOHN C. KEMBLE: THE FIRST LAWYER.—OTHER SETTLERS OF 1837 . . . . .	45
XI. ORGANIZATION OF THE COUNTY.—THE FIRST ELECTION . . . . .	51
XII. LOCATION OF THE COUNTY SEAT AT WINNEBAGO . . . . .	58
XIII. THE FERRY.—EARLY STATE AND COUNTY ROADS . . . . .	61
XIV. THE VILLAGE CHRISTENED.—THE FIRST SURVEYS . . . . .	65
XV. THE RISE OF METHODISM.—FIRST METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH . . . . .	68
XVI. FIRST CRIME.—FIRST MARRIAGES AND BIRTHS.—CLAIM FIGHTS . . . . .	75
XVII. THE COUNTY DIVIDED.—“MILE-STRIP CONTEST.”—MINOR NOTES . . . . .	81
XXVIII. NEW ENGLAND CONGREGATIONALISM.—THE FIRST CHURCH . . . . .	87
XIX. FIRST PATRIOTIC CELEBRATION.—THE POSTOFFICE.—FIRST COURTS . . . . .	97
XX. THE STAGE COACH.—EARLY HOTELS.—VILLAGE PLATS . . . . .	102
XXI. DR. A. M. CATLIN.—THE FOOTE BROTHERS.—FIRST SEMINARY IDEA . . . . .	107
XXII. DR. JOSIAH C. GOODHUE.—DR. ALDEN THOMAS . . . . .	110
XXIII. DR. GEORGE HASKELL.—THE GIPSY: THE FIRST STEAMBOAT . . . . .	114
XXIV. JAMES M. WIGHT.—JASON MARSH.—OTHER PIONEERS 1838-39 . . . . .	118
XXV. TRIALS OF THE PIONEERS.—SCARCITY OF PROVISIONS . . . . .	131
XXVI. ROCKFORD HOUSES IN 1838.—LATER BUILDINGS.—H. H. SILSBY . . . . .	134
XXVII. THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH.—JACOB KNAPP.—DR. THOMAS KERR . . . . .	138
XXVIII. VILLAGE INCORPORATED.—LAND SALE.—FIRST TEMPERANCE CLUB . . . . .	148
XXIX. ROCKFORD CEMETERIES . . . . .	151
XXX. THE SEVEN YEARS' WAR OVER THE SITE OF THE COUNTY SEAT . . . . .	154
XXXI. PLAN OF SECESSION AND PROPOSED ANNEXATION TO WISCONSIN . . . . .	160
XXXII. ROCKFORD'S ATTITUDE TOWARD REPUDIATION OF STATE DEBT . . . . .	166
XXXIII. THE LYCEUM.—SETTLERS OF THE EARLY FORTIES.—MINOR NOTES . . . . .	168
XXXIV. ORGANIZATION OF AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY.—THE FIRST FAIR . . . . .	172
XXXV. THE REIGN OF TERROR—THE BANDITTI OF THE FRONTIER . . . . .	174
XXXVI. ROBBERY OF MCKENNEY AND MULFORD.—COLONEL DAVENPORT . . . . .	182

# CONTENTS.

CHAP.		PAGE
XXXVII.	TRANSPORTATION: NAVIGATION OF ROCK RIVER.—PLANK ROADS	188
XXXVIII.	NEW ENGLAND UNITARIANISM.—FIRST CHURCH.—REV. A. H. CONANT	194
XXXIX.	EARLY ELECTIONS.—POLITICAL REMINISCENCES	201
XL.	LOUIS KENT: THE ONLY SLAVE IN THE COUNTY	208
XLI.	THE POLISH CLAIMS.—DELAY IN OBTAINING LAND PATENTS	210
XLII.	PIONEERS IN LOCAL JOURNALISM	215
XLIII.	THE FIRST DAM.—THE WATER POWER.—HIGH WATER OF 1844	222
XLIV.	POSTMASTERS OF ROCKFORD.—ITS ONLY POSTMISTRESS	226
XLV.	ORGANIZATION OF THE UNIVERSALIST CHURCH	229
XLVI.	FIRST BRIDGE.—FIRST FOUNDRY AND MACHINE SHOP	231
XLVII.	WORCESTER A. DICKERMAN.—ROCKFORD AS HE SAW IT IN 1844	235
XLVIII.	THE SOCIAL LIFE OF ROCKFORD IN THE EARLY FORTIES	248
XLIX.	PREDOMINANCE OF THE NEW ENGLAND TYPE IN EARLY ROCKFORD	253
L.	RIVER AND HARBOR CONVENTION.—WINNEBAGO DELEGATES	257
LI.	THE "REFORM" OF THE JUDICIARY.—CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION	260
LII.	THE GALENA AND CHICAGO UNION: THE FIRST RAILROAD	266
LIII.	REPRESENTATIVE ROCKFORD CITIZENS: 1842-50	273
LIV.	DEPARTURE OF MR. HAIGHT.—LOCAL STATISTICS.—OTHER NOTES	281
LV.	EMMANUEL CHURCH (EPISCOPAL)	284
LVI.	ROCKFORD FEMALE SEMINARY.—ANNA P. SILL.—ARATUS KENT	287
LVII.	STATE AND LOCAL SCHOOL FUNDS.—EARLY ROCKFORD SCHOOLS	296
LVIII.	ADOPTION OF TOWNSHIP ORGANIZATION	304
LIX.	SECOND CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH	306
LX.	INCORPORATION OF ROCKFORD AS A CITY.—MINOR NOTES	313
LXI.	ELECTIONS OF 1852-53.—ELIHU B. WASHBURNE	319
LXII.	THE WATER POWER.—THE MANNY-McCORMICK SUIT	321
LXIII.	EMERSON, LOWELL, WHIPPLE AND OTHERS LECTURE IN ROCKFORD	326
LXIV.	A FRAGMENT OF POLITICAL HISTORY.—ROCKFORD BANKS.—NOTES	329
LXV.	ROCKFORD SETTLERS 1851-54	333
LXVI.	THE FREE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM	341
LXVII.	THE FIRST LIBRARY.—WESLEYAN SEMINARY	344
LXVIII.	BAYARD TAYLOR'S TRIBUTE.—FRATERNITIES.—NOTES	347
LXIX.	MURDER OF SHERIFF TAYLOR.—EXECUTION OF COUNTRYMAN	350
LXX.	KENOSHA AND ROCKFORD RAILROAD.—EARLY MANSIONS.—NOTES	352
LXXI.	FATALITY AT A CHARIVARI.—TRIAL OF GOVERNOR BEBB.—NOTES	358
LXXII.	THE LINCOLN-DOUGLAS DEBATE	360
LXXIII.	ROCKFORD SETTLERS 1855-59	362
LXXIV.	ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY 1850-60	368
LXXV.	CONCLUSION	378

## ILLUSTRATIONS

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THATCHER BLAKE, . . . . .	Frontispiece
MAP OF NORTHERN ILLINOIS, . . . . .	17
FIRST METHODIST CHURCH, . . . . .	89
FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, . . . . .	89
RESIDENCE OF DANIEL S. HAIGHT, . . . . .	129
SECOND COURT HOUSE, . . . . .	129
OLD SECOND NATIONAL BANK BLOCK, . . . . .	177
W. G. CONICK'S RESIDENCE, . . . . .	177
MANDEVILLE HOUSE, . . . . .	233
BRINCKERHOFF HOUSE, . . . . .	233
OLD SEMINARY BUILDING, . . . . .	289
SCIENCE HALL, ROCKFORD COLLEGE, . . . . .	289
EAST STATE STREET, AS SEEN IN 1855, . . . . .	337



## INTRODUCTION

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IN the days of ancient Rome Janus was the guardian deity of gates. As every gate turned either way, so Janus was represented with two heads. One was of a youth, to indicate beginning; the other was of an old man, suggestive of the end. The first looked toward the future; the second, toward the past. The student, like Janus of old, surveys the past; and only from this point of view can he intelligently interpret the present, and in some measure forecast the future.

As a community becomes older, and the habits of its people become fixed, the study of local history receives attention. A movement was recently begun in this state for the purpose of creating popular interest in state and local history; and these subjects will doubtless receive more attention than formerly. This volume does not claim infallibility; but it does purport to be a thorough and conscientious effort to present in miniature the life of this community during a period of twenty-seven years from its first settlement. It is primarily a history of Rockford; but no history of the city would be complete unless considerable attention were given to the county, as a background. Nearly all the early settlers have passed away. This fact makes the fund of reminiscences smaller than might be desired. It is believed, however, this volume contains a larger number of local facts than were ever before presented in a single work. This is due to the fact that the author has been fortunate in obtaining access to sources of information that were not available to any of his predecessors. It is hoped that the treatment of all available material has been such that no future historian of Rockford will be obliged to go over the ground in order to substantiate the facts herein set forth. The Roman poet, Ovid, made Janus say: "Everything depends on the beginning." The author hopes that upon this foundation a later historian will rear the superstructure of a complete history of the Forest City to the close of the century.

Clio, the muse of history, is represented as wearing a wreath of laurel, and holding a half-open parchment roll, upon which she has inscribed the deeds of heroes and the songs of love.

## INTRODUCTION.

Clio and her sister-muses were nymphs of the springs that bickered down the sides of Helicon and Parnassus, the waters of which were supposed to possess the property of inspiration. Thus the historian of the old school painted ideal heroes and their exploits, with the grouping made very largely according to the taste of the artist.

This age demands a sterner realism. The modern historian is a patient plodder and a delver after facts. He must clear and arrange the buried fragments of the past, and so far as he may reconstruct the shifting tableaux of human life, "so that king and subject, wise and simple, high and low, rich and poor, capital and labor, virtue and vice, crown and spade, crook and plow, sword and pen, and all that makes the thought and act of life, may be to the present what they were to the past." The inventive genius of Rockford has produced a machine that will paint a portrait of high artistic excellence, with comparative ease. The next wonder may be a device to grind out history, with neither sweat of brow nor weariness of brain.

The author has received the cordial co-operation of the officers and executive and historical committees of the New England society. He is indebted to many friends for valuable aid in personal reminiscences. He has received the utmost courtesy from early settlers and others interested in the work; and to them is due, in large measure, whatever success may attend its publication. He is especially indebted to collections of manuscripts gathered some years ago by the late Hon. E. H. Baker and the late H. H. Silsby. Lewis F. Lake, M. A. Norton and H. C. Scovill have placed the records of their respective offices at his disposal. The clerks of the several churches have loaned their records; and the early records of Rockford seminary have been frequently consulted. The author is also indebted to Mrs. Harriott Wight Sherratt, Mrs. Katherine Keeler, Mrs. E. P. Catlin, Chas. H. Spafford, Hon. Wm. Lathrop, S. J. Caswell, and H. N. Starr, for the loan of family manuscripts and valuable information personally given. The splendid resources of the public library have been utilized, and without them this volume could not have been prepared upon its present scale.

CHARLES A. CHURCH.

ROCKFORD, ILL., MAY 22, 1900.



## CHAPTER I.

### GEOGRAPHICAL REVIEW.

THE territory now comprised within the state of Illinois first nominally formed a part of Virginia. The primal rights of the native Indians were never recognized by the explorers from the old world. The English crown, by virtue of discoveries made by the Cabots and the colonies planted by Sir Walter Raleigh, took formal possession of that portion of the new world known as Virginia. This name was given the new possession by the Virgin Queen, Elizabeth, in honor of herself. In 1606, early in the reign of King James I., two companies were formed for the colonization of America. Virginia was divided into two parts. To the London Company the king granted South Virginia, which extended from Cape Fear, in North Carolina, to the Potomac. To the Plymouth Company he gave North Virginia, which stretched from Nova Scotia to Long Island. The region between the Potomac and the Hudson was left as a broad belt of neutral territory. Under the revised charter of 1609 these grants were to run in straight zones across the continent, from the Atlantic to the Pacific. They included "all the islands lying within one hundred miles along the coast of both seas" aforesaid. So little was then known of the geography of North America, that it was believed the continent at this latitude was no wider than in Mexico. Hence England made extensive grants of land on this continent in utter ignorance of its extent and configuration. This charter was subsequently annulled by *quo warranto*, and special commissions issued, in which the king declared that the charter was abrogated for the benefit of the settlers; but that it should not affect their private or civil rights, but only the political rights of the company at home.

The English colonists in Virginia, however, did not penetrate far into the interior. Thus the royal claim to the "land throughout from sea to sea west and northwest" did not secure the title of the English crown to this vast domain. The French were the first actual settlers in the great Mississippi valley. During the latter part of the seventeenth century Father Marquette, Joliet, La Salle, Tonti and others explored the shores of



the Father of Waters and his tributaries, and believed they had found a terrestrial paradise. La Salle descended the Mississippi to the Gulf of Mexico. He named the country Louisiana, in honor of his king, Louis XIV. By virtue of these explorations France made formal claim to the territory lying on either side of the Mississippi. Possession is said to be nine points in the law. According to this doctrine France, and not England, was the first European power to establish its claim to the Illinois territory by actual occupation. Between the years 1695 and 1705 colonies from Lower Canada founded the villages of Kaskaskia, Cahokia and Vincennes. The French government united its possessions in Canada with those in Louisiana by a chain of posts, from Quebec to New Orleans; and Le Grande Monarque made numerous grants to his favorites. The large number of grants of land made during this period indicate that Illinois even at that early day had attracted general attention. Thus, with English colonies on the coast, and French occupation in the valley of the Mississippi, it was only a question of time when there would come a final struggle for the possession of this vast territory.

This crisis came with the French and Indian war, the issue of which committed the destiny of the west to the Anglo-Saxon civilization. By the treaty of Paris, in 1763, Great Britain obtained all the French territory east of the Mississippi, with the exception of the island of New Orleans. France ceded New Orleans and all of Louisiana west of the Mississippi to Spain. In all the great continent of America, France retained not a foot of ground.

The special claim made by Virginia to the Illinois territory was based upon the bold conquest of this region by Colonel George Rogers Clark. In 1778 Colonel Clark conducted a series of brilliant campaigns against the military posts at Kaskaskia, Cahokia and Vincennes. These posts and those upon the lakes were in possession of the British, under the command of Henry Hamilton, whose headquarters were at Detroit. From these posts the Indians were supplied with munitions, and were thus enabled to harass the settlements in Kentucky with their cruel guerrilla warfare. The French villages, the only settlements in the region, were seats of British power. If these posts could be taken, and the capture of the British soldiers effected, the entire region would be won for the Old Dominion. This result could only be effected by force; and the scheme appealed to the bold



spirit of Colonel Clark. He presented the matter to Patrick Henry, who was then governor of Virginia. Henry's ardent soul quickly caught the flame, and he secretly rendered such assistance as came within his power.

The outcome justified Colonel Clark's most sanguine expectations. His brilliant exploits constitute one of the most romantic chapters in pioneer history. The results were very great, and doubtless prepared the way for the purchase of Louisiana. If Clark had failed to conquer and hold the Illinois and Vincennes, there is reason to believe that the Ohio river would have been the boundary between the American and the British possessions. The colonial charters furnished color of title; but the American claim actually rested on the conquest and occupation of the west by Colonel Clark and the backwoodsmen. Thus the west was won by the westward movement of the backwoodsmen during the Revolution; by the final success of the Continental armies in the east; and by the diplomacy of Franklin, Jay and Adams in the treaty of Paris. Failure at any one of these points would have given the British the possession of the west. Colonel Clark spent his last years alone in poverty, in a rude dwelling on Corn Island, until he went to the home of his sister. When Virginia sent him a sword he received the compliments of the committee in gloomy silence and then exclaimed: "When Virginia wanted a sword I gave her one. She sends me now a toy. I want bread." He thrust the sword into the ground, and broke it with his crutch. His grave is in Cave Hill cemetery at Louisville, marked by a little headstone bearing the letters, G. R. C. It is said that not half a dozen persons in the United States can point it out. Fortune was unkind to him, and republics seemed ungrateful; but history must pay its just tribute to his genius, his patriotism, and his prowess.

Virginia assumed the title to this extensive territory, first by right of her charter, and secondly by the conquest of her own arms. These claims, though challenged by the other states, were successfully maintained by the Old Dominion; and the territory was at once organized into a county called Illinois. This word is derived from the Algonquin word *Inini*, or *Illini*, which means a perfect and accomplished man. The Illinois were an Indian tribe of the Algonquin nation, who occupied a portion of the state which now bears their name. These events occurred during the administration of Patrick Henry as governor of

Virginia, and therefore he may be said to have been the first governor of Illinois.

By the treaty of Paris in 1783, which terminated the Revolutionary war, the Illinois territory passed forever from the control of Great Britain. It was not clear, however, to whom the title was transferred. During the war four states had made claims either to the whole or to parts of this domain. They were Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York and Virginia. The first two colonies had received royal permission to extend from sea to sea. But Virginia was the lordly Old Dominion, which had actually conquered and held the disputed territory.

At this juncture Maryland arose to the occasion in 1777, with a novel and practical suggestion. As a condition of ratifying the Articles of Confederation, Maryland insisted that the four claimant states should surrender their claims to the United States, and that the latter should create a domain which should be owned by the confederacy in common. In 1780 congress recommended to the several states such cession of their several claims, and the creation of a national domain. Thus there were planted the fruitful seeds of national unity.

In pursuance of this recommendation Connecticut, Massachusetts, and New York surrendered their claims, which were more or less shadowy. The magnanimity of Virginia was genuine. The Old Dominion made a complete surrender of the magnificent territory of which she was in actual possession. In this concession she was greatly influenced by Thomas Jefferson. October 20, 1783, the general assembly passed an act which authorized the delegates of the state in congress to convey to the United States, on certain conditions, her entire territory northwest of the Ohio river. One of these conditions was that the ceded territory should be formed into states not less than one hundred, nor more than one hundred and fifty miles square or as near thereto as circumstances would admit. Accordingly on March 1, 1784, Thomas Jefferson, Samuel Hardy, Arthur Lee and James Mouroe, the delegates for the commonwealth in congress, presented to the United States a deed of cession of the territory northwest of the Ohio river. By the Ordinance of 1787 congress provided that not less than three nor more than five states should be formed from this territory, as soon as Virginia should alter her act of cession and consent to the same. Virginia, by her act of December 30, 1788, promptly ratified the act of congress of the preceding year, "anything to



the contrary in the deed of cession of the said territory by this commonwealth to the United States notwithstanding." Thus was accomplished the transfer of this public domain to the United States.

By the act of congress of May 7, 1800, the Northwest Territory was divided. That portion east of a line drawn from the mouth of the Kentucky river to the British possessions, was called the Ohio Territory. The remainder, west of this line, was called Indiana Territory, and comprised the present states of Indiana, Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin. William Henry Harrison was appointed governor. Indiana Territory was divided by act of congress approved June 11, 1805, and that portion corresponding to the present southern portion of Michigan was set apart, under the name of Michigan Territory. In 1809 the Indiana Territory was again divided. That portion lying west of the Wabash river and a line from that river due north to the British possessions, was constituted a separate government, under the name of Illinois. This area included the present states of Illinois, Wisconsin, and peninsular Michigan. The seat of government was fixed at Kaskaskia, where a territorial legislature, which consisted of the governor and the judges, convened in June, 1809. Thus the machinery of the first grade of civil government was put in operation in Illinois Territory.

In 1812 the Territory of Illinois was advanced to the second grade of territorial government. This organization continued until 1818. In January the territorial legislature petitioned congress for admission into the union as a sovereign state. A bill for this purpose was presented in congress in April, and through the influence of Nathaniel Pope, the territorial delegate, the northern boundary was extended from the line indicated in the petition to latitude  $42^{\circ} 30'$ . The reason for the change of the northern boundary line will be more fully explained in a subsequent chapter. The act of congress of April 18, 1818, provided for the admission of Illinois into the union. In August of the same year the Illinois convention adopted a constitution and ordinance accepting the terms of admission prescribed by congress. The final act by which Illinois attained its present geographical and political status was a resolution of congress, adopted December 3, 1818, which formally declared the admission of the state into the union.

## CHAPTER II.

### GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY OF WINNEBAGO COUNTY.

THE Geological Survey of Illinois Volume V. furnishes the most complete information concerning the geology and topography of Winnebago county. This work was published by the authority of the legislature of the state. The article devoted to this county was contributed by James Shaw, and many of the facts given in this chapter were taken therefrom.

The geology of Winnebago county is simple in character. There is first the usual quaternary deposits, which consist of sand, clays, gravels, boulders, subsoils and alluvium. Then follow the three well-known divisions of the Trenton limestone, which outcrop along the streams and hills, and show themselves in railroad cuts, wells and quarries in different parts of the county. These divisions are the Galena, Blue and Buff limestones of the western geologists. A perpendicular section, as near as could be constructed, exhibited the following strata: Quaternary deposits, average depth about fifteen feet; Galena limestone, ninety-six feet; Blue limestone, thirty-five feet; Buff limestone, forty-five feet. These measurements of the limestones were made at actual worked outcrops. At the time Volume V. of the Geological Survey was published no evidence of the St. Peter's sandstone had been discovered, although it was then believed that it came near the surface at Beloit and Rockton. In 1885, however, when Rockford began boring artesian wells, the St. Peter's sandstone was discovered. Its upper surface was irregular, varying from one hundred and seventy to two hundred feet below the surface of the ground. This strata varies from two hundred to two hundred and fifty feet in thickness. Mr. Shaw gave it as his opinion that the Trenton limestones were at the time of his survey the only ones that had been exposed or excavated in the county.

The surface geology comprises alluvial deposits, loess, and the drift proper. The usual alluvial bottoms exist along the Rock, Pecatonica and Sugar rivers. These are from one to five miles wide. On the latter two the deposit is deep, black, and

rich, and supports in places a heavy growth of timber. The deposit along Rock river is not so rich, and is composed more of sands and clays, with occasional strips of better soil. A number of the bluffs along Rock river are composed in part of loess clays, in which no fluvatile shells were noticed. This formation is of quite limited extent.

The drift proper is very largely developed. It is composed of loose detrital matter, which is often of considerable thickness, brought from long distances, and deposited over large areas of the county. This material is thought to have been brought from the metamorphic regions of the north by the action of water. The railroad track from Beloit to Caledonia cuts at intervals through long, undulating swells of land. These swells are pure, unmodified, unstratified drift. Other railroads exhibit the same beds along their tracks, though in a less marked degree. Every township in the county has these gravel beds, and their underlying associate deposits of clay and sand.

Two-thirds of Winnebago county is underlaid by the Galena limestone. It is a heavy-bedded, yellowish, dolomitic limestone, compact and irregular. There are several notable quarries and outcrops. The first heavy outcrop of the Galena limestone on Rock river in this county is about three miles above Rockford. All the cuts on the Galena division of the Chicago & Northwestern railway, which runs across the southern part of the county, show the lead-bearing rocks. One of the heaviest outcrops is east of Harlem station, on the railroad running from Rockford to Caledonia. The strata are massive and solid, and furnish splendid material for railroad masonry.

The Blue limestone succeeds the Galena in the descending order. It is largely developed in the northern and northwestern portions of the county. It is a thin-bedded, bluish-gray limestone. The first two cuts east of Shirland, made by the Western Union in its excavations for a track, are perhaps the best exposures of the Blue limestone.

Only a limited portion of the county is underlaid by the Buff limestone. The chief outcrop of this formation is at the village of Rockton, where it is forty-five feet in thickness.

The county is not without resources in economic geology. The three formations of the Trenton rocks, previously noted, furnish building stone of good quality. Age does not affect it, and buildings erected sixty years ago are still well preserved. This is especially true of the Galena limestone. The quarries



at Argyle, Rockford and at other points north and south of Harlem supply material for railroad masonry. The Buff also furnishes stone of good quality for ordinary mason-work, and is easily quarried and worked. At present there is only one quarry of the Blue limestone in the city.

Sands and clays for economic purposes are found almost everywhere along the banks of the rivers, and may be obtained from thickly strewn drift deposits. For some years a fine molding sand was obtained north of School street in Rockford, but this supply is now exhausted. About two miles northeast of the city there is a large surface of molding sand, which has been used by all the foundries in Rockford for the past ten years. There is also a quantity of molding sand in the vicinity of Rockton. Lime of excellent quality is obtained in large quantities in and around Rockford. Near Brown's creek there is a bed of white clay; and good red brick is obtained from the clay in other parts of the county.

There is also a supply of good building sand. Limestone for rubble masonry abounds in almost unlimited quantity about Rockford. Large footing stone is obtained, but nothing for ornamental purposes. There is no available sandstone in the county. There is a general uniformity with the geological formation of the Rock river valley. Bog iron exists around many of the springs, but this deposit has no economic value. The ground is impregnated with iron, which is soluble in water, so that it disintegrates lime mortar in the foundations to the extent that it is necessary to use cement in place of lime for foundations. The county possesses very little mineral wealth. The deposits of peat are not of great value. The peat is not available for fuel, and can only be used as a fertilizer. Copper in its pure state has occasionally been found; but there is no deposit of the metal.

The topography of the county may be briefly noted. It is well watered with fine streams. Rock river enters the county about six miles from its northeast corner, at Beloit, runs nearly due south to Rockford, then bends gradually to the west and enters Ogle county. It affords water-power at Beloit, Rockton and Rockford. Pecatonica river enters the county from the west, eight miles from its southwestern corner, and flows in a general easterly and northerly course about twenty miles, and empties its turbid waters into Rock river near the village of Rockton. Sugar river enters the county from the northwest,

and flows into the Pecatonica near the village of Harrison. Other streams are Kishwaukee river, and Killbuck, Kent's, Keith's, and Kinnikinick creeks.

The Indian names of these streams have their significance. Pecatonica means the "crooked stream," or "muddy water." Sinissippi, the Indian name of Rock river, signifies "the rocky river." Kishwaukee means "clear waters." The name Winnebago is translated "fish-eater."

A considerable portion of the county was covered with timber of various qualities. There was much scattering timber and brush-land in the northwestern portion along Sugar river and its tributaries, and on portions of the northern bank of the Pecatonica. This area is interspersed with occasional swampy tracts. In the southern portion of the county, along and near the Kishwaukee creeks, the face of the country is rough, hilly, brushy, and was covered with an occasional growth of timber. A few miles below Rockford, along the northern bank of Rock river, and extending north and west from the same, there is a tract of barrens covered with brushwood, and a light growth of white oak and other timber. The other portions of the county are chiefly prairie, interspersed with small and beautiful groves. For agricultural purposes the county is not considered equal to Stephenson on the west, nor "Little Boone," its eastern neighbor.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE MOUND-BUILDERS AND THE WINNEBAGO INDIANS.

PROF. J. W. FOSTER, in his *Pre-historic Races of the United States*, says: "The subordinate valleys of the Rock river, the Fox, Kankakee and Illinois, show abundant evidence of former occupancy by the Mound-builders, and whilst the mounds are inconspicuous, they are not destitute of relics, and the human remains are indicative of a race whose skulls are marked by peculiarities which distinguish them from the red man."

Three classes of mounds were found in Winnebago county. There was the common round mound, from ten to thirty feet in diameter, and from two and a half to five feet high. These mounds were quite numerous along the banks of the Rock, Kishwaukee and Pecatonica rivers. The oblong-shaped mound is much less common, but is frequently remarkable for its great length. One was found within the present limits of Rockford which measured one hundred and thirty feet in length, twelve feet wide at the base, and three or four feet high. Mounds of the third class have a fancied resemblance to some form of animal life, and are called "effigies." The most common forms of these are called Bird and Turtle mounds, and are found in many localities in the county. Some fine specimens of this class, as well as the round and oblong mounds, are still carefully preserved on the grounds owned by the Misses Beattie and Mrs. Clara G. Sanford, north of the city water-works, on the west side of the river. The round mounds were frequently constructed for the purpose of sepulture, the elongated for circumvallation or as "game-drives," while the effigies were probably ceremonial.

A number of archæologists believe that the builders of these mounds were a race inhabiting this country before the American Indian; and in the absence of any information concerning their origin, they are denominated "mound-builders." Other recent authorities incline to the opinion that the mounds



were constructed by the ancestors of the Indians. Their earth-works are found in large numbers in Rockford and vicinity; there are probably not less than five hundred within the limits of Winnebago county. These earliest inhabitants had no beasts of burden, and naturally their travel and traffic were largely by canoe up and down the rivers. Their settlements, therefore, and their monumental mounds were uniformly located near or upon the river banks; and in the vicinity of the confluence of streams these united evidences of a dense population are generally abundant. Near the mouth of Kishwaukee river more than one hundred have been surveyed by Prof. T. H. Lewis, and probably as many existed near Rockton before their demolition during the progress of railroad construction and other improvements. When the cut was made in East Rockford in grading for the Galena & Chicago Union railroad in 1852, many mounds were destroyed; and gruesome evidence of the sepulchral purpose of some of them was given by the fragments of human skeletons disinterred.

Winnebago county does not figure prominently in Indian history. The Winnebagoes occupied it as a portion of their reservation at one time. The earliest Winnebago traditions relate to their residence at Red Banks, on the eastern shore of Green Bay, in Wisconsin, where they traded with the French. This tribe was first met by the Jesuit fathers near the mouth of Fox river, at the head of Green Bay. Confusion may arise from the fact of two rivers with the same name in the same state. One stream rises in Waukesha county and flows in a general southerly direction and enters the Illinois river at Ottawa. The other rises near the southern boundary of Green Lake county, flows westward to Portage City, thence northward until it expands into Lake Pacawa; after a tortuous course it enters Lake Winnebago, issues from the northern end of this lake, flows northeastward and enters Green Bay. These streams are distinguished respectively as Fox river, and Fox river of Green Bay. The latter is always understood whenever the name is mentioned in connection with the history of this tribe.

The Winnebagoes belonged to the Dakota or Sioux nation. During the era of authentic history they wandered to southern Wisconsin and northern Illinois and Iowa. In 1812 the Winnebagoes of Illinois occupied a section, of which this county formed a part. To the south were the Illinois tribes, and the

disputed territory between the two shifted north and south as the fortunes of war favored the one or the other. In time, however, the Winnebagoes were driven well back within the present limits of Wisconsin, and were subsequently regarded as a tribe of that state. The territorial claims of these contestants were not finally settled until 1825. By a treaty negotiated at Prairie du Chien August 19 of that year between the United States, the Winnebagoes, the Sacs and Foxes, the Pottawatomies and other attending tribes, the boundaries of the Winnebago country were finally determined. Thus was peace established after a nearly continuous warfare of almost two centuries.

The records of the interior department at Washington show not less than twelve treaties negotiated between the United States and the Winnebagoes, during the period of fifty-one years from 1816 to 1867. The most important treaty was negotiated at Prairie du Chien, August 1, 1829, by which the Winnebagoes ceded to the United States certain lands in Illinois, of which Winnebago county west of Rock river was a part. The consideration was "eighteen thousand dollars in specie, annually, for the period of thirty years; which said sum is to be paid to said Indians at Prairie du Chien and Fort Winnebago, in proportion to the numbers residing within the most convenient distance of each place respectively; and it is also agreed, that the said United States shall deliver immediately to said Indians, as a present, thirty thousand dollars in goods; and it is further agreed, that three thousand pounds of tobacco and fifty barrels of salt, shall be annually delivered to the said Indians by the United States for the period of thirty years."

Caleb Atwater was one of the commissioners on the part of the United States government in negotiating this treaty. In a book in which he gives an account of the proceedings of this council he takes occasion to remark at considerable length on the beauty and force of Indian oratory as displayed on that occasion. He says their persons are the finest forms in the world. As he stands erect, with eyes flaming with ardor, and a mind laboring under an agony of thought, the Indian is a most impressive orator. When he speaks before his assembled nation on some great national subject, he shows most forcibly that he feels an awful responsibility in what he attempts to advocate in behalf of his people. Mr. Atwater relates that he has seen a chief, when he approached the sale of his country in his speech, turn pale, tremble with fear, and sit down perfectly



exhausted in body from the effect. In council on such occasions, on either side of the speaker, sit all the chiefs and warriors of his nation; behind him, within sound of his voice, sit the women and children. His subject then becomes of the highest conceivable importance to himself and his entire nation. In such a position the character of his eloquence is easily conceived. It abounds with figures drawn from every object which nature presents to his eye. He thanks the Great Spirit that he has given them a day for holding their council without clouds or with few, as the case may be; that the several paths between their homes and the council fire have been unattended with danger; and hopes that during his absence the beasts may not destroy his corn, nor any bad bird be suffered to fly about the council with false stories. Thus far the speaker may have proceeded without enthusiasm; but should he touch upon the sale of his country, his whole soul is in every word, look and gesture. His eye flashes fire, he raises himself upon his feet, his body is thrown in every attitude, every muscle and nerve is strained to its utmost tension. His voice is clear, loud, distinct and commanding. He becomes, to use his own expressive phrase, *a man*. Then he recalls, with deep pathos and genuine eloquence, the time when his ancestors inhabited the entire continent, and how they have been driven by the white man from river to river, and from mountain to mountain, until they now have no home in which they may live in peace.

Article V. of the treaty at Prairie du Chien granted sections of land to certain Indian descendants of mixed blood who did not wish to migrate with their tribe. Thirty-six of these descendants were given one section of land each; two received two sections each; and three received two sections jointly. The total grant was forty-two sections, divided among forty-one grantees. These grants were unlocated or "floating" lands. From this fact came the word "float," by which these sections were popularly known. The grantees were allowed to select a section, and their choice was to be approved by the Indian commissioner and by the president of the United States. There were several of these "floats" in Rockford township. The east half of section fourteen and all of section thirteen west of Rock river, containing six hundred and thirty-seven acres, were located for Catharine Myott. Further reference to this tract will be made in a subsequent chapter. Section twenty-one was located for Therese Lecier, child of Mauh-nah-tee-see: section twenty-



two was selected for James Lecier; and section twenty-seven for Simon Lecier. These sections now comprise the most populous and wealthy portions of West Rockford, with its thousands of beautiful homes. There were other "floats" located in this immediate vicinity, some of which may be noted. Section eleven in Rockford township was claimed by Domitille, child of John Baptiste Pacquette. Besides the section above mentioned, Catharine Myott was given another section, of which the west half of section ten forms a part. One section in Winnebago county was given to Brigitte, the child of Hee-no-kau. These lands could not be sold without the consent of the president of the United States. The Indians were the wards of the nation, and the approval of the president was required by the treaty for their protection from dishonest speculators; but this precaution was not always successful. There is no evidence of local record that the transfer of Brigitte's claim by the original grantee has ever been approved by the president. A full list of these "floats" located in this county may be obtained from the Tract Book in the office of the circuit clerk.

Upon the close of the Black Hawk war, by the terms of the treaty negotiated by General Scott, September 15, 1832, the Winnebagoes ceded their lands lying east of the Mississippi, in Wisconsin, and accepted a reservation in Iowa, designated as the Neutral Ground. The Winnebagoes were loth to emigrate, and their removal was finally effected by the government in 1837. By another treaty, concluded November 1, 1837, they finally ceded all of their lands lying east of the Mississippi river. By the terms of this treaty they were to remove west of this river within eight months thereafter. Their reservation was subsequently changed several times, until in 1865 they were permanently located on their Omaha reservation in Nebraska. In 1890 there were twelve hundred and fifteen Winnebagoes on this reservation; and nearly an equal number were scattered over Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin and Michigan, where they now live chiefly by agriculture, with a strong predilection for hunting.

The Winnebagoes were men of good stature and dignified bearing, with the characteristic black hair, black, glistening eyes, and red skins of the Indian race. They maintained the position of a tribe of independent feelings and national pride. The claim made for them of considerable mental capacity is

sustained by the cranial measurements made some years ago at the Academy of Natural Sciences at Philadelphia. In these examinations their crania were shown to have an average internal capacity of eighty-nine cubic inches, and a facial angle of seventy-nine degrees.

The so-called "Winnebago war" occurred in 1827, in the vicinity of Galena. It was more of a scare than a war, and has no local interest.

For many years after the Winnebagoes had removed from this section, small companies would occasionally return to visit their former hunting-ground. As Israel could not sing the songs of Zion in a strange land, so these red men of the forest could not forget their early home. The love of country and kindred is the same in subject or in king. It is a universal passion that makes the wide world kin. The Creator hath made of one blood all nations of men.

The Winnebago has given a name to a lake, a fort, a village and a county in Wisconsin, and to a village, a township and a county in Illinois. The Wisconsin Indian village is the present city of Beloit. Fort Winnebago is a historic spot. Its site is within two miles from the present city of Portage, Wisconsin. The fort was built in 1818-29, at the solicitation of John Jacob Astor, of the American Fur Company, to protect his trade from the Winnebagoes. Jefferson Davis was one of the first lieutenants in the original garrison.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE BLACK HAWK WAR.

THE Sauk or Black Hawk war directed the attention of eastern settlers to the Rock river valley. The history of this outbreak also has a local interest from the fact that this famous Indian warrior, in his flight from Rock Island, followed the general course of Rock river through this county, into Wisconsin territory, where he was defeated and captured.

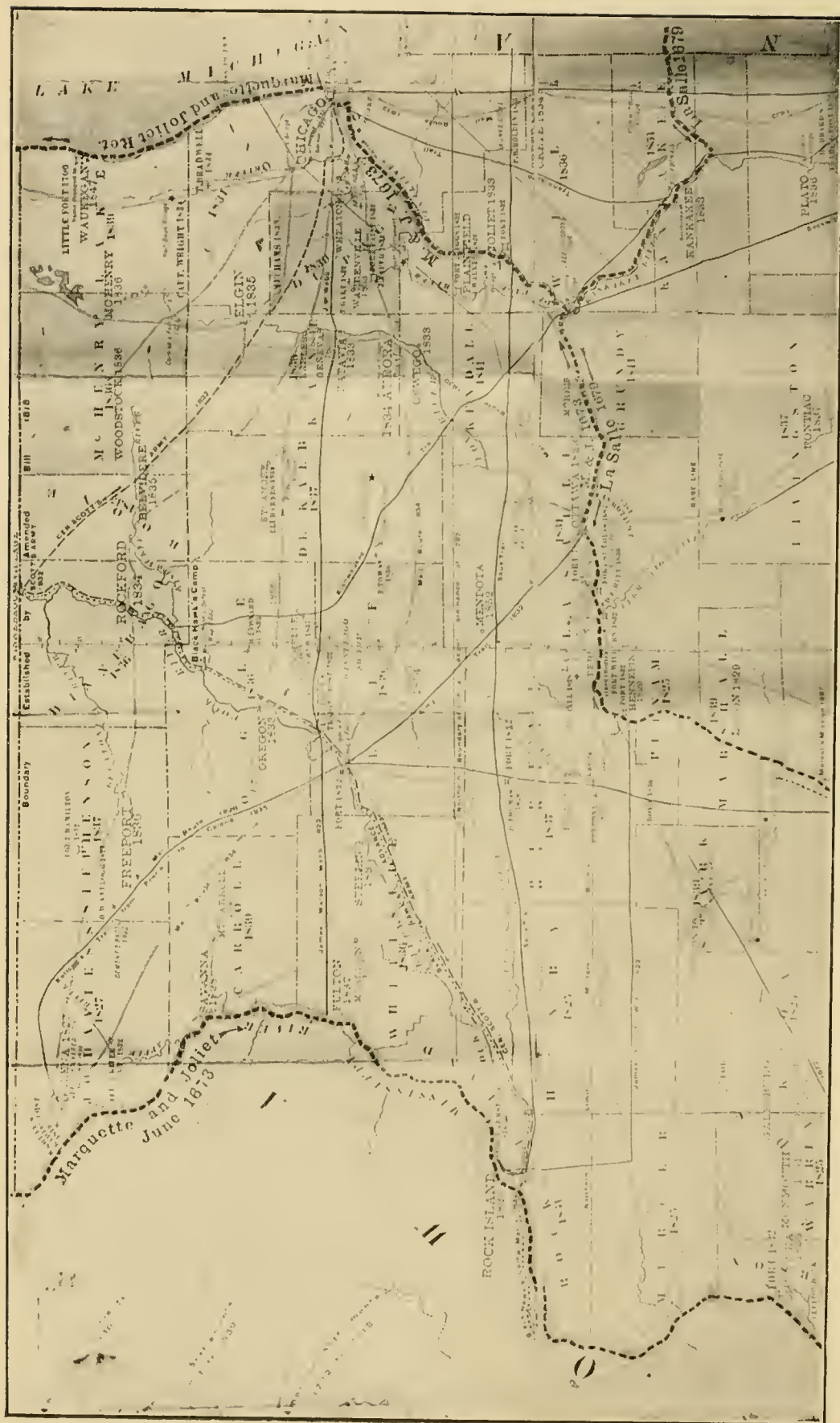
Ma-ka-tai-me-she-kia-kiah, or Black Hawk, was a chief of the allied tribes of the Sacs and Foxes. He was born at the Sac village, on the site of Rock Island, in 1767. About 1833 a book was published at Rock Island, which purported to be an autobiography of Black Hawk. Subsequent editions of this work have been published. Governor Ford, however, in his History of Illinois, places little value upon this work. He says it was dictated by Colonel Davenport, an old Indian trader, and Antoine Le Clair, a United States interpreter for the Sacs and Foxes, and edited and published by J. B. Patterson. Governor Ford believed that Black Hawk knew comparatively little of this alleged autobiography, although it has been recognized as authority by reliable writers upon this subject.

The Sacs, according to an Indian tradition, were first placed by the Great Spirit in the vicinity of Montreal. Their enemies conspired to drive them from their home to Mackinac and other points, until they built a village near Green Bay, on what is now Sac river, a name derived from this circumstance.

The Foxes were first found on the northern shore of Lake Ontario. From there they were driven to Detroit, thence to Mackinac, and from there to the river which bears their name, at a point near its entrance into Green Bay. The Foxes subsequently abandoned their village, and formed a treaty of alliance with the Sacs. Neither tribe was sufficiently strong to successfully meet its enemies. Hence they became one nation, and the bond of friendship was never broken. This allied tribe belonged to the Algonquin nation.







MAP OF NORTHERN ILLINOIS.—Published by permission from R. A. Blanchard's History of Illinois.



The Sacs and Foxes remained for some time in the vicinity of Green Bay. But as early as 1718 they had obtained a firm footing on Rock river. A party of young men descended the Rock to its mouth, and upon their return they presented a favorable report of the country. The entire tribe then migrated to the southwest, drove the Kaskaskias from the country, and founded a village on the point of land at the confluence of Rock and Mississippi rivers. At the beginning of this century the Sacs and Foxes occupied lands in northwestern Illinois lying between the Winnebagoes and the Mississippi river.

In 1804 a treaty was negotiated at St. Louis between William Henry Harrison and five chiefs of the Sac and Fox nation. Mr. Harrison was then governor of the Indiana Territory, and of the district of Louisiana, superintendent of Indian affairs for the district, and commissioner plenipotentiary of the United States for concluding the treaty. By this treaty the Sacs and Foxes ceded their land on Rock river and territory elsewhere to the United States. The treaty provided that the Indians should retain these lands until they were required for settlement. During the war of 1812 with England, through the influence of Colonel Dixon, a British officer at Prairie du Chien, a portion of this tribe allied itself with the English. This faction was called the "British Band," and Black Hawk was its acknowledged leader. The other portion of the tribe remained peaceable during the war, and reaffirmed the treaty of 1804 at Portage des Sioux, in September, 1815. The hostile warriors professed repentance for their violation of good faith, and at St. Louis, in May, 1816, they confirmed the treaty of 1804. A small party, however, led by Black Hawk, persistently denied the validity of the treaty of 1804 as well as all subsequent agreements. He contended that certain chiefs, while at St. Louis in an intoxicated condition, were induced to sell the Indian country without the consent of the nation. Competent authorities have differed concerning the equity of the treaty of 1804; but the Sacs and Foxes as a nation never disavowed it. On the contrary, they reaffirmed it in the treaties of 1815 and 1816.

Amicable relations existed between the Sac and Fox nation and the United States from the close of the war with England until 1830. In July of that year Keokuk, another Sac chief, made a final cession to the United States of the lands held by his tribe east of the Mississippi. According to this treaty, his people were to remove from Illinois to the country west of the

Mississippi, and they quietly removed across the river. This treaty was negotiated without the consent of Black Hawk, and he determined to resist the order of the government for the removal of his tribe west of the Mississippi. This resistance brought affairs to a crisis.

During the winter of 1830-31 Black Hawk and his tribe left their village, as usual, and crossed the Mississippi on a hunting expedition, to procure furs wherewith to pay their debts to the traders, and buy new supplies of goods. They re-crossed the river in April, and on their return they found their village in possession of the pale-faces. The United States had caused some of these lands, which included the chief town of the nation, to be surveyed and sold. A fur-trader at Rock Island had purchased the very ground on which their village stood. Black Hawk ordered the settlers away, and destroyed their property. A truce was arranged, but it did not permanently settle the difficulty; and May 18 eight settlers addressed a memorial to Governor Reynolds, in which they stated their grievances. The governor immediately communicated with General Gaines, of the United States army, who was then in command of the military district. General Gaines repaired to Rock Island in June, with a few companies of regular soldiers. Upon ascertaining the critical situation, he called upon Governor Reynolds for mounted volunteers. The governor honored the requisition, and in response to his call fifteen hundred volunteers from the northern and central counties rallied to his support at Beardstown, and were placed under command of General Duncan, of the state militia. This army, after a few days' march, joined General Gaines below Rock Island, where the two generals formed a plan of action. General Gaines took possession of the village June 26; but Black Hawk and his band had quietly departed during the night in their canoes for the western shore of the Mississippi, where they raised the white flag of truce. They subsequently re-crossed the river, and thus claimed protection. June 30 General Gaines negotiated a treaty with Black Hawk and his chiefs and braves, by which they agreed to remain forever on the western side of the river; and never to re-cross it without permission from the president of the United States or the governor of the state. Notwithstanding the treaty, in the spring of 1832 Black Hawk attempted to re-assert his right to his former territory.

Hostilities began in April, when Black Hawk and his band



re-crossed the Mississippi, under pretense of paying a visit to his Winnebago friends in Wisconsin. The manifest purpose of this visit was to form an alliance with the Winnebagoes in offensive warfare. General Atkinson, who was then in command of Fort Armstrong, sent messengers to warn Black Hawk to return. The warrior did not heed the warning, but continued his march until he reached Dixon's Ferry, where his braves encamped. The news of Black Hawk's return to Illinois reached Governor Reynolds, who raised a force of eighteen hundred men, under command of General Whiteside. This army arrived at Dixon on the 12th of May. Meanwhile Black Hawk had departed and encamped on Rock river thirty miles above.

While at Dixon an ambitious officer named Stillman asked the privilege of making a reconnoissance on Black Hawk's camp. It was granted with reluctance, and Major Stillman started with two hundred and seventy-five men on the adventure. When the volunteers approached the camp of Black Hawk, he sent a party of six men to meet them, under protection of a white flag. By some mistake, undisciplined volunteers fired upon them, and two were killed while in retreat. Black Hawk was justly indignant, and he resisted the attack with his usual spirit. The result was the slaughter of eleven volunteers, and the others fled in confusion. This was the first blood drawn in the Black Hawk war. On the following day General Whiteside led his entire force to the scene, near a creek since called "Stillman's Run." To this day the visitor to the little village of Stillman Valley is shown the spot where the eleven soldiers are supposed to have been buried. No stone marks the place, and it is known only by tradition.

The news of the Indian war spread rapidly throughout the east, and the administration sent nine companies to the scene, under command of General Scott. He arrived at Fort Dearborn in Chicago, July 8. The cholera had broken out among his men on the way, and he was thus detained at the fort. As soon as the cholera had subsided General Scott removed his quarters from Fort Dearborn to the banks of Desplaines river. From there he sent the main body, under command of Colonel Cummings, to the site of Beloit, then a deserted Winnebago village. At that point orders came from the general in chief command for the army to march down Rock river to Fort Armstrong on Rock Island, at which place General Scott had arrived by a hasty march across the country by way of Naperville.

The further details of this war will be briefly noted. Black Hawk retreated up Rock river into Wisconsin, and was hotly pursued. The army trail, made in following Black Hawk's band to the head-waters of the Rock, passed through the First ward of Rockford. Stephen Mack was the guide. This trail met the river bank above the city at the dry run which is now bridged on North Second street, near the residence of H. H. Hamilton. In July Black Hawk determined to try to save himself by crossing the Mississippi river. He was overtaken at Blue Mounds, on Wisconsin river, by General Henry's division. A battle ensued on the 21st, in which the Sac chief lost fifty warriors while crossing the river.

Black Hawk continued his retreat after the battle until he was again overtaken August 2, near the mouth of the Bad Axe river, in Wisconsin. In the battle which followed nearly the entire remnant of Black Hawk's army was killed or drowned in attempting to cross the river. Black Hawk fled to Prairie La Cross, a Winnebago village, where he surrendered to Chaetar and One-eyed Decora, two Winnebago chiefs, who delivered him to General Street, the Indian agent at Prairie du Chien, August 27. The campaign had lasted seventy-nine days.

The speech of Black Hawk, addressed to General Street, at Prairie du Chien, after his defeat at the battle of the Bad Axe, is a splendid specimen of Indian eloquence, and reveals a patriotism unsurpassed by the "noblest Roman." Eloquence is born of strong passion, and is never a trick of rhetoric nor a mere intellectual feat. The following, from this humiliated savage, is worthy of Burke or Webster:

"You have taken me prisoner with all my warriors. . . I fought hard. But your guns were well aimed. The bullets flew like birds in the air, and whizzed by our ears like the wind through the trees in the winter. My warriors fell around me; it began to look dismal. I saw my evil day at hand. The sun rose dim on us in the morning, and at night it sunk in a dark cloud, and looked like a ball of fire. That was the last sun that shone on Black Hawk. His heart is dead and no longer beats quick in his bosom. He is now a prisoner to the white men; they will do with him as they wish. But he can stand torture, and is not afraid of death. He is no coward. Black Hawk is an Indian. . . Farewell, my nation! Black Hawk tried to save you, and avenge your wrongs. He drank the blood of some of the whites. He has been taken prisoner, and



his plans are stopped. He can do no more. He is near his end. His sun is setting, and he will rise no more. Farewell to Black Hawk!"

On the 10th of September the Indian prisoners were taken to Jefferson Barracks, below St. Louis. From there Black Hawk was sent to Washington, where he was presented to President Andrew Jackson. April 26, 1833, he was sent to Fortress Monroe, where he remained until the 4th of June, when he was permitted to return to his people. Upon his return he was restored to his tribe as a chief subordinate to Keokuk. Black Hawk died October 3, 1838, at the age of seventy-one years. He was dressed for burial in a uniform presented to him when in Washington by the president. The body was placed in the middle of the grave, in a sitting posture, on a seat constructed for this purpose. On his left side, the cane given him by Henry Clay, was placed upright, with his right hand resting upon it. Many of the old warrior's trophies were placed in the grave.

Black Hawk was free from many of the vices that others of his race contracted from their association with the white people. He never used intoxicants to excess. As a warrior he knew no fear, and on the field of battle his feats of personal prowess stamped him as the "bravest of the brave." In social relations he was affable and true. His devotion to his wife, with whom he lived more than forty years, was strong and manly. In the home he was an affectionate husband and father.

The Black Hawk war made no military reputations; but Zachary Taylor and Abraham Lincoln bore an humble part. Mr. Lincoln never alluded to it as anything more than an interesting episode in his life. In satirizing the military pretensions of another, he said: "Do you know, Mr. Speaker, I too am a military hero? . . . I fought, bled and came away. If he saw any live fighting Indians, it was more than I did; but I had a good many bloody struggles with the mosquitoes."

## CHAPTER V.

STEPHEN MACK.—JOHN PHELPS.—JOSEPH KEMP.

STEPHEN MACK was the first white man who made a permanent settlement in Winnebago county. The exact date is unknown, but it was probably about 1829. It is also quite certain that he was the first settler in the Rock river valley. The student of local history is indebted to Edson I. Carr, who has given in his History of Rockton the best information concerning this adventurer; and the author is indebted to Mr. Carr for many of the facts given in this chapter.

Mack was born in Poultney, Vermont, during the latter part of the last century. He was for a time a student at Dartmouth college, but it does not appear that he was ever graduated. His love of adventure was shown in early life. Soon after the war of 1812 he came to Detroit with his father, who held a position under the government. The younger Mack subsequently joined a government expedition around the lakes from Detroit to Green Bay. While there Mack learned from traders that the Rock river country presented favorable opportunity for a trading post. He accordingly made the journey with an Indian pony, and arrived at a point near the site of Janesville; thence to Turtle Village, near what is now Beloit. While there he learned of an Indian camp to the south, at Bird's Grove, about a mile and a half from the mouth of Pecatonica river, and he started for that point. He lost the trail and descended the Rock until he came to a Pottawatomie village at Grand Detour, where he remained several years. Mack established trade with the Indians, and took their furs in exchange for merchandise. His journey to and from Chicago were made by Indian ponies. During this time Mack married Ho-no-ne-gah, a daughter of the Pottawatomie chief. This alliance, however, did not establish a perpetual bond of friendship between Mack and the tribe. He incurred the enmity of the red men because he refused to sell them whisky and firearms. While on a trip to Chicago a plan was laid to murder him and take his goods. His faithful Indian wife discovered the plot. She mounted a pony, met him a considerable distance from the camp and gave him warning. Together they started for the camp of the Winnebagoes at Bird's Grove. There they were made welcome and given protection, and there they made their home.

Ho-no-ne-gah, though born of a savage race, exhibited traits of a more refined womanhood. She was a true wife, and thoroughly devoted to her home and children. Her husband's tribute of devotion was sincere. She was modest and disliked to appear conspicuous. She knew the remedies which the Great Spirit had spread before her in nature, and with these she visited the sick. The needy were also blessed by her gracious ministry. Ho-no-ne-gah always wore the habit of her race. Only once was she known to don the dress of her white sisters. But she felt so ill at ease that she soon cast it aside, and ever afterward appeared in the attire of her tribe. Mrs. Jesse Blinn, who still remembers her, testifies to her excellent taste in dress and to her skill in the use of the needle.

Upon the outbreak of the Black Hawk war, Mack was living at peace with his Winnebago friends. Black Hawk visited this tribe in his flight up Rock river, and attempted to induce the warriors to accompany him into Wisconsin. Mack opposed this alliance, and thereby incurred the displeasure of the Sac chief. The Winnebagoes remained at their old camp, and Black Hawk proceeded without them. But the feeling was so strong against Mack during this visit of Black Hawk that the chief of the Winnebagoes advised him to leave the camp for personal safety. There is a story that he sought seclusion on what is now called Webber's Island, where he was supplied with food by his wife until the storm had passed. It is not certain whether this is history or romance.

Mack foresaw that a speedy settlement of the Rock river valley would follow the Black Hawk war. The Pecatonica was then considered a navigable stream for one hundred miles from its mouth, and Rock river for one hundred and fifty miles into Wisconsin Territory. Mack believed that the bluff at the mouth of Pecatonica river was an available site for a town. Accordingly in the autumn of 1835 he took possession of this tract, upon which he resided until his death. He planted a village, which was called Macktown. The place still retains this name, although the promising settlement of sixty years ago, save the old substantial farm house, has disappeared. Mack had a bold policy of expansion, and valued a corner lot near his store at one thousand dollars. When he was told that his land was too uneven for a town, he replied that "it is far better than Milwaukee."

Mack engaged in various business enterprises. He kept a



general store and did a successful business. He brought his goods from Chicago on Indian ponies, before the advent of wagons. In 1838 he established a ferry across Rock river, which was managed for a time by William Hulin. It was then purchased by Jesse Blinn, who carried on the business under a license issued by the county commissioners' court. About 1842 Mack built, mainly at his own expense, a bridge in the place of the ferry. This was the first bridge across Rock river in the state. This structure was carried away by a freshet June 1, 1851. Another bridge, which had been built previous to the freshet one mile farther down the river, changed the course of travel, and Macktown fell into decline.

Political honors came to Stephen Mack. He was elected associate justice in 1849, and held the office until his death. He was appointed the first township treasurer of the school fund of Rockton. Upon the adoption of township organization in 1850, he was a candidate for supervisor, but was defeated by a few votes by Sylvester Talcott.

Mack had taken Ho-no-ne-gah to be his wife under the Indian form of marriage. In order to fully protect the title of his children to his estate, he and his wife were re-married September 14, 1840, by William Hulin, a justice of the peace. This action, however, was probably unnecessary. It is a principle in international law that a marriage is recognized as legal whenever it is held to be such in the country in which it was solemnized. This principle would be applied to the marriage rite among Indians and similar races. On the 4th of April, 1840, Mack executed his will. The full text of this instrument is given in Mr. Carr's History of Rockton. By this will he divided his property equally among his wife and eight children.

Ho-no-ne-gah died in 1847. She was the mother of eleven children, two of whom died in infancy. Louisa and Mary were students at Rockford seminary for a time, but their free Indian nature could not long endure such restraint. Louisa and her husband, according to latest information, were residing in Chippewa county, Wisconsin. Caroline, the youngest, was a babe when her mother died.

In 1848 Mack married Mrs. Daniels, of Harrison. The ceremony was performed at Beloit. His subsequent domestic life was not as happy as it had been with Ho-no-ne-gah. February 14, 1849, Mack executed a codicil to his will. Since the date of the former instrument changes had occurred in his family.



Three children had been born, one child and Ho-no-ne-gah had died, and he had remarried. The codicil equally divided his estate among his wife and children.

Stephen Mack died very suddenly April 10, 1850. At the time of his death he owned land in several adjoining sections, which aggregated about one thousand acres. He was buried on his farm beside his Indian wife. Thirty years later, May 19, 1880, their remains were removed and buried in the Phillips cemetery, near Harrison.

Many reasons have been given why this educated gentleman of New England should have sought a life on the frontier, and married a woman of a savage race. It is said death claimed the idol of his first love. Others believe an insidious appetite drove him to this western wilderness. It may have been a keen foresight by which he caught a glimpse of the marvelous development of the west. Whatever the motive, he kept his secret until he passed beyond the judgment of men. His career was strange and romantic. He is remembered as dignified in bearing, genial and courteous, a kind husband and father, a true friend, and an honest man.

In the summer of 1833 John Phelps, in company with a Frenchman, started down Pecatonica river from Mineral Point, Wisconsin, in a canoe, on a voyage of discovery. These men descended the Rock, and made a brief stop at the mouth of the creek where Germanicus Kent and Thatcher Blake located claims a year later. Mr. Phelps and his companion were pleased with the site, and would have located there had it not been for the scarcity of timber. For this reason they continued their journey down the river, and selected a site now occupied by the town of Oregon, in Ogle county.

Neither Mack nor Phelps ever lived within the limits of Rockford; but a history of the city would scarcely be complete without a record of the facts given in this chapter.

Joseph Kemp was in this section from 1830 to 1840, and again from 1842 to 1844. He has not been in this county since the latter date. Mr. Kemp first came from a point below Rock Island on the Mississippi, then to Rockford by way of Rock river. He did not, however, permanently reside in what is now the city of Rockford. In July, 1899, he was still living, at Michigan City, in his eighty-ninth year, and was seen by Charles L. Williams.

## CHAPTER VI.

### GERMANICUS KENT AND THATCHER BLAKE.

IT was stated at the beginning of Chapter IV. that the Black Hawk war was the immediate occasion of the settlement of the Rock river valley. There were, however, remote and more general causes. The peace following the great Napoleonic conflict in Europe had stimulated emigration to this country. President Monroe's administration had passed into history as the "era of good feeling." The Erie canal and the construction of railroads, steamboats and stage lines had created a period of expansion. The great undeveloped northwest, east of the Mississippi river, was then quite well known, and presented a splendid opportunity for capital and enterprise. Illinois occupied a central position. The Illinois and Michigan canal had been chartered, and a large number of railroads had been subsidized by the state. A tide of inflated prosperity was swiftly carrying every department of industry and speculation toward the financial breakers of 1837. Under these conditions the actual history of Rockford began.

Germanicus Kent was born of English ancestry in Suffield, Connecticut, May 31, 1790, nearly one hundred and ten years ago. In early manhood he went from his native state to New York. In 1819 he went from there to the south with testimonials of first-class business ability. He first stopped for a short time in Blacksburg, Virginia. About 1822 Mr. Kent went to Huntsville, Alabama, where he was for some years engaged in the dry goods business in partnership with Preston Yeatman. June 7, 1827, Mr. Kent married Miss Arabella Amiss, who was born in Culpepper, Virginia, April 9, 1808. The ceremony was performed at Blacksburg. Mr. Kent was subsequently a partner in the firm of Patton, Donegan & Co., at the Bell Cotton factory on Flint river, about nine miles from Huntsville. The firm owned a dry goods store at Huntsville at the same time, but Mr. Kent was not personally interested in it. It has been said Mr. Kent was an abolitionist, but this statement is not fully

established. At one time he owned several slaves, and brought one of them to this state.

Mr. Kent went from Alabama to Galena, Illinois, where his brother, the Rev. Aratus Kent, a Presbyterian clergyman, was stationed as a home missionary. This brother was deeply interested in higher education, and his name will re-appear in this book. At the time Aratus Kent left Huntsville he possessed an amount of ready money that was considered a competence for those days.

Thatcher Blake was born at Turner, Oxford county, Maine, March 16, 1809. He resided in his native state until 1834, when he started for the west by way of Boston, Albany, Buffalo, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Louisville and St. Louis. At St. Louis he conversed with the soldiers who had been in the Black Hawk war, who gave interesting descriptions of the Rock river country and Galena. The latter was then being rapidly populated by reason of its extensive lead mines. Mr. Blake therefore visited Galena. There he became acquainted with Germanicus Kent. This acquaintance ripened into friendship, and they arranged to explore the Rock river valley.

In June, 1834, these gentleman started from Galena, in a democrat wagon, on their tour of exploration. They went north into Wisconsin Territory to the Pecatonica river, about four miles from what was then known as Hamilton's Diggings, a small mining village operated by a son of Alexander Hamilton. A man named Ransom had settled on the Pecatonica at this point, of whom they procured a canoe. Their purpose was to explore the Pecatonica and Rock rivers with a view of settlement if the country should meet their expectations. Their first landing was at a point now included in the city of Freeport. It was then an Indian camp, known as Winneshiek's Village. Winneshiek was the name of a chief of a band of Indians which numbered from two to three hundred. Mr. Kent went ashore and explored the country some distance from the river. The Indians gathered about Mr. Blake in such numbers that he became alarmed, and was compelled to row from the shore and remain in the middle of the stream, as a precaution against robbery of their moderate supply of provisions. From Winneshiek's Village they continued their journey and made frequent landings to explore the country. They ascended the Pecatonica to its junction with Rock river, and came down the latter until they arrived at the mouth of the small tributary to which the



name of Kent's creek was subsequently given. They selected a site on the west side of the river. Rock river was then considered navigable and a waterway to the north and south. The site of Rockford, on a navigable stream, midway between Chicago and Galena, was at once recognized as possessing superior advantages. Kent and Blake then proceeded down the stream to Dixon's Ferry, which received its name from John Dixon, the first white settler of Lee county, who located at that point in the spring of 1830. There they sold their canoe and returned overland to Galena, by the road leading from Peoria which crossed Rock river at that point. This trip covered nine days.

Soon after their return to Galena they prepared for a second journey. They procured supplies, and with a heavily laden lumber wagon and a single span of horses, they started overland for their new El Dorado. There were no roads, nor even Indian trails. Their route was the Galena and Dixon line of travel as far as Chambers' Grove. From this point they took a northeasterly course through an unknown country. Their journey covered four days. On the evening of Sunday, August 24, these pioneers arrived at their destination. The party consisted of Germanicus Kent, Thatcher Blake, a Mr. Evans, and another man whose name is unknown.

The settlement of Rockford was not a romantic adventure. These men wore no badges of eminence. They were not flattering courtiers of a foreign prince, and possessed no commissions or patents. They did not thrust their swords into the virgin soil and solemnly take possession in the name of an alien king. They did not kiss the earth in token of devotion, nor recite to the empty air the purpose of their coming. There were no wintry skies, no breaking waves, nor stern and rock-bound coast. They were not exiles from the land of their birth, nor did they seek the treasures of the mine. Neither did they come in quest of a faith's pure shrine nor freedom to worship God. Kent came to build a sawmill, and Blake was a tiller of the soil. The significance of their coming was in the fact that they came to stay. Thus did Germanicus Kent and Thatcher Blake make the first actual and permanent settlement in what is now the city of Rockford. In this quiet, prosy way did these sturdy pioneers illustrate Goethe's observation that the ideal can only come from the development of the real.

Mr. Kent was the ruling spirit in this enterprise. He was then in the prime of life, and had already proven himself to be



a thoroughgoing man of affairs. With Dante he could say: "In the midway of this our mortal life I found me in a gloomy wood." Mr. Kent was the director and provider of those who were to begin the work of transformation from the "gloomy wood" to the Forest City. Those who came with him were drawing pay, and were without expense. It was otherwise with Mr. Kent. Every day brought its expense, and no income. He had sold his southern home, and his family at Galena was patiently awaiting developments. He could not retrace his steps. He could only look to the future, and trust for the best. Mr. Kent kept a journal, and under date of August 18, 1834, he writes: "Hired Mr. Blake at eighteen dollars per month to live with me on Rock river, to take charge of my business, and to do all kinds of work, to remain with me from one month to twenty-four months."

Both Kent and Blake located claims. Mr. Kent's claim comprised a tract of land which included the Tinker estate and the water-power, and extended south to Montague's Addition; on the west it included the estate now owned by the family of the late Judge Church, and extended north to half section line; the eastern line followed the bank of the river. Mr. Kent, however, only held temporary squatter's possession of this tract, and he obtained full legal title to only a small portion of it. Mr. Kent's name does not appear prominently in the real estate transactions of his time, except as the agent of others. Sections twenty-one, twenty-two and twenty-seven, which include a large portion of West Rockford, were Indian "floats," to which reference was made in a preceding chapter. These sections were sold by their respective owners to Daniel Whitney, of Green Bay, Wisconsin, for eight hundred dollars each. The deeds were executed February 12, 1840. Mr. Whitney gave power of attorney to Charles S. Hempstead, of Galena. Mr. Hempstead, through Kent and Brinckerhoff as agents, sold the greater part of these sections to Isaac N. Cunningham, Abiram Morgan and Richard Montague, who became, in a sense, the proprietors of the corresponding portion of West Rockford.

Mr. Blake's claim included parts of sections twenty and twenty-nine. A claim was made in the autumn of 1834 by Mr. Kent for an English gentleman named John Wood, of Huntsville, Alabama. Mr. Wood, however, did not take possession of this claim until the following spring. The first work done by these pioneers was the erection of two log cabins. Mr. Kent's

cabin was on a site directly east of Mrs. Tinker's brick house, and was removed when South Main street was opened. Mr. Blake's cabin was built in the grove on the claim which he had chosen.

During the autumn and winter Mr. Kent made trips to Chicago and Galena. He employed a number of workmen, who had come from Galena, in various kinds of work. Among these was the construction of a dam and a sawmill on Kent's creek. The timber for the mill was cut from the grounds now occupied by Rockford college. In the following January, when the ice was sixteen inches thick, a sudden thaw swept away the dam. To this day the observer will notice that the rock at the bottom of the creek, near the Swiss cottage, shells off, and the force of the water and ice made a deep hole in the bottom of the creek. The stream was then twice or three times its present width, and its current was proportionally stronger. Such was the fate of Rockford's first dam, which was built very near the spot where Hon. Robert H. Tinker's suspension bridge spans the stream. Early in the following spring workmen began digging the race; the construction of the second dam, just below the first, was undertaken in June, and the mill was completed in July. When the dam was completed the water arose so as to make a twelve-foot head, and covered the land now occupied by the several railroads as switch-yards. The water sometimes backed nearly to State street. Several years later the citizens determined to remove this dam, because they believed it bred malaria; and this resolution was executed without due process of law.

Besides the cabins already noted, Mr. Kent began the erection of another and better log house, in the fall of 1834, which was completed the following spring. This structure consisted of an upright and a wing, and was considered an uncommonly good house for those days. Mr. Kent's family probably came from Galena in May, 1835. Mr. Blake boarded in the family for two years, and only occupied his own cabin in the grove when he found it more convenient to do so while tilling his land. The business of the settlement during the first years included a general store, a blacksmith shop, sawmill, a primitive hotel, a crude system of banking, and mail facilities of a private sort. All these were under the general proprietorship of Mr. Kent.

It may be safely said that few men in trade, commerce or manufacturing survived the financial crash, and the depression which swept over the country in 1837 and later. Mr. Kent was



poorly prepared for the storm. His ready capital had become exhausted, and he was now in debt for money, merchandise and property. His goods had been sold on credit, and collections were impossible. His property was depreciated and unsalable, and embarrassment and failure were unavoidable. Mr. Kent made the best settlement of his affairs possible under the circumstances, and honestly surrendered everything. His capital which he brought with him, his buildings and improvements, his plans and preparations, and even his prospects were gone; and he saw no star of hope in the Rockford which he had founded and helped to build; no opportunities which he might retrieve. And so in 1844 he bade her a long and sad farewell and went to Virginia, where he made his home the remainder of his life. He engaged in trade in Craig, Fayette and Montgomery counties. Mrs. Kent died in Blacksburg, Virginia, May 26, 1851. Mr. Kent lived with his daughter, Mrs. Mary Irby Black, the last five years of his life, in feeble health, in Blacksburg, where he died March 1, 1862.

This man will ever stand foremost in the history of Rockford, in point of time and early events. In his character and life there are elements that arrest and fix attention, and which merit grateful remembrance. Kent school, in South Rockford, Kent's creek and Kent street are named in his honor.

Fortune was more kind to Mr. Blake. He resided on his farm until 1851, when he removed into Rockford and engaged in real estate business. For two years preceding his death Mr. Blake operated extensively in timber lands in Wisconsin. Mr. Blake died October 8, 1880. Mrs. Blake was living in November, 1899, at an advanced age, and feeble in mind and body. Mrs. Clarence Bean is their daughter. The Blake school is named in honor of Thatcher Blake.

## CHAPTER VII.

### PICTURESQUE ROCKFORD.—ITS FLORA AND FAUNA.

**M**OST of the country around Rockford was originally prairie. The first settlers found the west side of what is now the city largely wooded, reaching south below Knowlton street, and north as far as Fisher avenue, and extending west beyond the creek, and to the high ground of South Rockford, and up the south branch; also on the East side from near State, south to Keith's creek, and east to creek and to Sixth street. North of State, on the flat, was wood and brush up as far as the brewery. John H. Thurston gives this vivid description of the east side of the river as it appeared in the spring of his arrival: "The season of 1837 opened early, and as the earth became clothed in green, it presented the most beautiful landscape I have ever seen. Innumerable flowers dotted the scene in every direction. What is now the Second ward was covered with tall, thrifty white oak timber. The fires had killed most of the underbrush, and it was a magnificent park from Kishwaukee street west to the river, and from Walnut street south to the bluffs at Keith's creek."

Rock river is a historic waterway, and presents a great variety of picturesque scenery. Southey's apostrophe may be addressed to her: "Thou art beautiful, queen of the valley! thou art beautiful." The Rock has practically two heads: the smaller, in a rustic stream which flows from the north into swamp-girted Lake Koshkonong; the larger, in the four lakes at Madison, the charming capital of Wisconsin, which empty their waters into the Avon-like Catfish or Yahara, which in turn pours into the Rock below Lake Koshkonong. The river, at Rockford, before it was dammed, was nine or ten feet below its present level, and about four rods narrower, with clear gravel bed, and no mud or swamp about its shores. The water was very clear and pure before the cultivation of the land on its banks had caused the wash of soil by the rains. There is an



interesting historic spot on the river some miles below Rockford. Margaret Fuller visited Oregon in 1843. There she found new themes for her muse. At the riverside there is a fine spring whose waters are cool and unfailing. On the bluff above it today are growing gnarled and twisted cedars. In the branches of one there was an eagle's nest. Beneath its shade Margaret Fuller wrote her poem, "Ganymede to his Eagle." The spring still sends forth its pure stream, and hundreds of people visit the spot. Under the shadow of the trees which falls upon the pool, they read the marble tablet set in the solid rock above, which bears this inscription: "Ganymede's Springs, named by Margaret Fuller (Countess d' Ossoli), who named this bluff Eagle's Nest, and beneath the cedars on its crest wrote 'Ganymede to his Eagle,' July 4, 1843."

The level at the intersection of State and Madison streets, on the East side, was about ten feet higher than at present. At the intersection of State with First the level was about ten feet lower than it is today. Between these two points the ground was six feet above its present level. From the river bank to Madison was therefore quite a steep ascent. West of the river, the ground was low, as it now appears at the knitting factories, and so continued nearly to Main street, as it yet remains in some places.

South of the depot of the Chicago & Northwestern railroad, on the West side, and from ten rods west of Main street, the land was low, only a little above the creek, with the exception of the ridge near the creek. When the dam was built this area was called the pond. This depression has been filled, and the site is mainly devoted to railroad purposes.

The bluffs at the college grounds descended steep to the water's edge, unbroken and unworn. They were covered with grass, brush and trees on the top and sides. There were many red cedars, some of which were large and gnarled. The whole formed a pleasant and romantic spot.

At first there were no roads, and the first track would be followed until a road was worn or a change made. The crossing of streams and sloughs was difficult. East of the city, and running nearly parallel with the river, was a wagon road made by the army wagons and trains at the time the troops under Major Smith passed on their way to the battle of the Bad Axe, in Wisconsin, in 1832, where Black Hawk was defeated. This road, however, did not run on the line needed by the settlers, and it

was soon obliterated. The Indian trails were of little use. The red men always went single file, so that their trails were but narrow paths, and of no special value to the settlers. These trails were easily traceable as late as 1840, and possibly later.

Few antiquities, save arrows and hammers, were found, and the early race left little to mark its occupation of this region. Only a small number of Indian graves were found, and these did not indicate careful burial. Some traces of burying on scaffolds and in trees were supposed to remain; but little information can be obtained upon this point. The headless Big Thunder skeleton sat in his stockade on the court house mound in Belvidere as late as the autumn of 1838. But neither his renown as a warrior and chief, nor common reverence for the dead, protected his bones or marked their grave.

The Indians had taken their final departure previous to 1834. There were a few Pottawatomies in the vicinity of Rockton. Rock river was apparently the dividing line between the Pottawatomies and the Winnebagoes. The latter had removed to their western reservation. Those who occasionally returned, singly or in small companies, to revisit their former home, were harmless to the settlers.

Wild flowers were abundant, both on the prairies and in the woods. They were of great variety and beauty. Hickory-nuts, butternuts, black walnuts and hazelnuts were plenty. In fruits, there were crab apples, wild plums, thorn apples, grapes, blackberries, raspberries and strawberries.

Game was plenty. It consisted of deer, wolves, wildcats, otter, coon, muskrat, squirrel, woodchuck, wild geese, ducks, crane, heron, plover, snipe, prairie hens, partridges, quail, loon, gull, and pigeons. Mr. Thurston says: "Having never shot a game bird previous to my arrival in Rockford, the vast quantity of feathered game which I saw migrating northward in the spring of 1837 excited my unbounded surprise and admiration." Fish of the varieties now found in this locality was abundant. Wild honey was obtained in considerable quantity. The small birds then found still remain, except those taken for game. Snakes were quite numerous. The rattlesnake and the massasauga were poisonous, and the blowing adder and a variety of water snake were also so considered. Today a snake is rarely seen, except in woodland and on river bottoms.



## CHAPTER VIII.

### DANIEL SHAW HAIGHT.—OTHER SETTLERS OF 1835.

THE first settler of what is now East Rockford was Daniel Shaw Haight, who arrived April 9, 1835. Mr. Haight came to Illinois from Bolton, Warren county, New York. A year or two previous to his appearance on Rock river he had selected a claim near Geneva, Kane county. He sold this claim, and in company with two or three men, he came to Rockford on a tour of inspection. He selected a tract of land, which comprised a large part of what is now the First and Second wards. Mr. Haight went back to Geneva for his family, and in May he returned to Rockford with his wife and child; Miss Carey, who was Mrs. Haight's sister, and a hired man. Mrs. Mary Haight and her sister were the first white women to settle in the county, as it is supposed they preceded by two or three weeks the arrival of Mrs. Kent. Mrs. Haight appears to have been equal to the duties and trials of pioneer life. She had no acquaintance with books or literature; but she possessed a good mind, and was alert, shrewd, and affable to strangers. Mr. Haight was a rugged, roistering pioneer, and a shrewd man of affairs.

Upon his arrival Mr. Haight put up a tent under a large bur oak tree, which his family occupied until his cabin was completed. This dwelling, built in the summer of 1835, was the first structure on the East side. It was built on the eastern part of the lot which now forms the northeast corner of State and Madison streets. This spot was at the brow of the table-land, from which the descent was rapid toward the river. The house was built in regular pioneer style, without the use of a single nail. The main part was about eighteen feet square, built of oak logs. It had a puncheon floor, two windows and a door. The cellar was simply an excavation under the centre. "Such a house," says Mr. Thurston, "may be built with an axe and an auger, and is a warm, comfortable dwelling. Haight made an addition in '36, with a space between ten feet wide and roofed over, which had a shingle roof and floor

of sawed lumber." Mr. Haight's second house was on the northeast corner of State and Madison streets. It was a frame structure, and completed in 1837 by Thomas Lake and Sidney Twogood. This house was divided and a portion removed to the northeast corner of Walnut and Second streets. It is the oldest frame structure now standing in Rockford.

The first public religious service in Rockford was held the second Sunday in June, 1835, at the house of Germanicus Kent, and was conducted by his brother, the Rev. Aratus Kent, of Galena. It has been said that on that day every soul in Rockford attended divine worship. The audience comprised Mr. and Mrs. Kent, Mr. and Mrs. Haight, Miss Carey, Thatcher Blake, Albert Sanford, Mr. Van Zandt, who was Mr. Kent's millwright, a man in the employ of Mr. Haight, and two other persons whose names are unknown. Thus it will be noted that in early June, 1835, there were less than a dozen persons in Rockford. This small number may be explained by the supposition that several workmen, who had been temporarily employed by Mr. Kent, had removed from the settlement.

It is impossible to give the name of every settler in what is now Rockford township at the close of the first year after Mr. Kent's arrival. In the autumn of 1834 Mr. Kent solicited a number of his southern friends to settle in the rising colony. Reference was made in Chapter VI. to John Wood. Another gentleman who thus responded was James B. Martyn. He was a native of the County of Cornwall, England, and had emigrated to Huntsville, Alabama, where he had made the acquaintance of Germanicus Kent. Mr. Martyn arrived in Rockford late in the summer of 1835. He subsequently removed to Belvidere, where he engaged in the milling business.

James Boswell and James Wood also came from the south about this time. Mr. Boswell settled on a claim about half a mile north of State street, on the west side of the river, immediately above Dr. Haskell's orchard. The next year Mr. Boswell traded with Mr. Spaulding for property directly opposite, on the east side of the river.

Eliphalet Gregory was born in Danbury, Connecticut, April 23, 1804. He came from New York in June, with his family. His claim extended east one-half mile from Kishwaukee street, and south from State to his brother Samuel's claim. His first log house was near Keith's creek, between Sixth and Seventh avenues, and west of Seventh street. A part of his later



grout house still stands on Charles street. Mr. Gregory died February 16, 1876.

Samuel Gregory arrived in Rockford December 8th. His claim was approximately bounded by what are now Sixth and Fourteenth avenues, and Ninth street and Churchill Place. His log house was on Seventh avenue, by Keith's creek, between Ninth and Tenth streets. Mr. Gregory spent his last years in Pekin, New York, where he died in May, 1886. His sons are: Delos S., John Clark, Homer, and James B. There were also four daughters: Mrs. Delia A. Johnson, deceased; Mrs. Addie S. Witwer, of Chicago; Mrs. Edna J. Hulbert, deceased; and one who died in infancy.

Ephraim Wyman arrived in September. He was a native of Lancaster, Massachusetts. In 1824, when he was fifteen years of age, he removed to Keene, New Hampshire, and from there he came to Rockford. He followed the business of baker from 1835 until 1850. In the latter year he went to California, where he remained three years. Mr. Wyman owned and platted a tract of land in the heart of West Rockford, to which reference will be made in a subsequent chapter. A street on the West side bears his name. Mr. Wyman was county treasurer and assessor in 1844-45. In his last years he was afflicted with blindness. Mr. Wyman was a worthy gentleman, and is kindly remembered. He died in the autumn of 1893. Mrs. Wyman still resides in Rockford. Their only child died when less than four years old.

Levi Moulthrop, M. D., had the distinction of being the first resident physician in Winnebago county, as now organized. Dr. Whitney had probably preceded him at Belvidere, which at that time was included in Winnebago county. Dr. Moulthrop was descended from Mathew Moulthrop, who settled at Quinnipiac, now New Haven, Connecticut, April 18, 1638, and who was one of the original signers of the Plantation Covenant, ratified June 4, 1639. Dr. Moulthrop first came to this county in the autumn of 1835, and permanently settled here in the following spring. He was born near Litchfield, Connecticut, November 1, 1805. He received his early education in his native town, and completed a course of medicine and surgery at Fairfield college, in the state of New York. In the spring of his arrival in this county, he settled upon a claim of several hundred acres near Kishwaukee, now in New Milford township, and began the practice of medicine. June 30, 1840,

Dr. Moulthrop was married to Miss Margaret, eldest daughter of Sampson George, and died after a brief illness, September 12th of the same year. His son, Levi Moulthrop, was born in the spring of the following year. Dr. Moulthrop is said to have brought the first copy of Shakespeare into the county. He was a member of the Masonic fraternity, a Democrat in politics, and a communicant of the Episcopal church.

Richard Montague came July 1st from Massachusetts, and purchased a tract of land near the city. A street in South Rockford, an island in Rock river and a ward school bear his name. Mr. Montague died July 16, 1878. His son, S. S. Montague, became an expert railroad surveyor.

Adam Keith came from Indiana. He was born in Pennsylvania, in 1795. From there he went to Ohio, thence to Indiana. His name was given to Keith's creek. Mr. Keith removed from Illinois to Wisconsin in 1846. He died at Beaver City, Nebraska, in 1883, at the age of eighty-seven years.

William E. Dunbar settled in what is now South Rockford, and was a leader in the organization of the county. Mr. Dunbar served as county recorder from 1839 to 1843. He died October 16, 1847.

P. P. Churchill was born in Vermont in 1804. He pre-empted a farm of one hundred and sixty acres east of the city. Mr. Churchill died January 11, 1889. He is remembered for his simple ways, kind heart and upright life.

Among other settlers in the township during the year were: John Vance, John Caton, Joseph Jolly, Charles Hall, Lewis Haskins, Milton Kilburn, William Smith, Luke Joslin, Israel Morrill, D. A. Spaulding, Lova Corey, Alonson Corey, Abel Campbell, Ezra Barnum, Anson Barnum, James Taylor, William Hollenbeck, John Hollenbeck, V. Carter, Joseph F. Sanford, Jonathan Corey, Daniel Beers, Mason Tuttle, and Mr. Noble. The following were also employed by Mr. Kent during the year: Squire Garner, Gaylor, Perry, Norton, Phineas Carey, Jefferson Garner, Nathan Bond, Charles J. Fox, James Broadie and wife. All these were not within the present city limits, but they were residents in the vicinity. They made the hamlet their place of trade, and assisted in its growth.

The foregoing list, however, did not comprise the total population of the county. Settlements had been made in nearly all the townships. In June, 1860, Judge Church delivered an historical address before the early settlers. At that time Judge



Church gave the following list of settlers in what are now the different townships, in September of 1835: New Milford: Samuel Brown, William R. Wheeler, Richard Hogaboom, Phineas M. Johnson, John Adams, John B. Long, Mr. Paddleford, James Campbell; Guilford: Henry Enoch, William E. Enoch, J. A. Pike, Abraham I. Enoch, John Kelsoe, Mr. Rexford, Colonel James Sayre, Abel C. Gleason, John Brink, William G. Blair; Butler, now Cherry Valley: Joseph P. Griggs; Harlem: William Mead, Chauncey Mead, Zemri Butler; Roscoe: Robert J. Cross, Robert Logan, Elijah H. Brown, William Brayton; Rockton: Thomas B. Talcott, William Talcott, Henry Talcott, John F. Thayre, Isaac Adams, Pearly P. Burnham, Darius Adams, David A. Blake, Ellison Blake, John Kilgore, John Lovesse; Owen: James B. Lee, Richard M. Walker; Burritt: Isaac Hance, John McIntosh, A. M. Sherman, John Manchester and family, Elias Trask, Alva Trask; Lysander, now Pecatonica: Ephraim Sumner, William Sumner, Mrs. Dolly Guilford, Elijah Guilford, Thomas Hance; Elida, now Winnebago: David A. Holt; Howard, now Durand: Harvey Lowe, Nelson Salisbury, who made claims in 1835, but did not occupy them until the spring of 1836.

These, with their families, property, houses, and other improvements, made that first short period determine all the future. They possessed and enjoyed the land. Others were following close behind. The future seemed promising, and they had only to prepare for it. Considerable ground was broken for cultivation; but the newly broken soil was of little use until its turf had rotted and mellowed. There was thus probably little raised that year in crops, except possibly sod corn, potatoes, vines and garden vegetables. Winter wheat, however, was sown for the following spring.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE PIONEERS OF 1836.

THE tide of emigration, which may be said to have begun in 1835, continued for several years. When the Rockford Society of Early Settlers was organized, January 10, 1870, its constitution provided that male residents of the county who settled therein previous to 1840 were eligible to membership. In this and the preceding chapter is given a partial list of those who came previous to and including 1836. In succeeding chapters will be published an incomplete roster of settlers of 1837-39, inclusive. According to the Old Settlers' standard of eligibility to membership, these names belong to the historic roll of honor.

One of the first emigrants of this year came from the old world. Thomas Lake was a native of Blackford, in the Parish of Selworthy, County of Somerset, England. He sailed from Bristol in 1832, and arrived in New York after a voyage of seven weeks and three days, just as the cholera was beginning its westward march with such alarming fatality. Mr. Lake's reminiscences of the time between his arrival in New York and his settlement in Rockford four years later, is a vivid picture of the hardships of pioneer life. Soon after his arrival in Chicago in October, 1835, he met an old acquaintance, Sidney Twogood, from Cleveland. Mr. Lake also saw Dr. J. C. Goodhue, whom he had called to see Mrs. Lake, who was ill. The Doctor advised Mr. Lake to settle in Rockford. He and his friend Twogood accepted this advice and arrived in Rockford, and for a time they followed the carpenter's trade. Mr. Lake also took up a claim, which was subsequently known as the Willis Smith farm, and now owned by P. Byron Thomas. Mr. Lake died at the home of his daughter, Mrs. Jane Lake, in Guilford, in the autumn of 1886.

Herman B. Potter was a native of Connecticut. He reached Rockford in October. Mr. Potter purchased a farm about two miles south of State street on the Kishwaukee road. Later he



came to the city and built a house where the First Congregational church now stands. This home was purchased by Mrs. Chamberlain. Mr. Potter was a prominent citizen in the early history of the county, and was at one time a member of the county commissioners' court. In 1850 Mr. Potter visited California. In 1853 he removed his family to Iowa, where he resided until his removal to Galesburg, Illinois. Mr. Potter died at Galesburg, March 16, 1880, at the age of seventy-five years.

Selden M. Church was a son of New England. He was born in East Haddam, Connecticut, March 4, 1804. His father subsequently removed to Livingston county, in western New York. The son came to Chicago in 1835 with a team; thence he went to Geneva, in Kane county, where he remained until he settled in Rockford in the autumn of the following year. During his early residence in the township, when the Winnebago Indians made occasional visits to their former hunting-ground, Judge Church frequently visited their camp, and obtained such knowledge of their language as enabled him to intelligently carry on conversation with them. From an early date until the time of his death, Judge Church was a notable figure in the official and business life of the community. He filled the offices of postmaster, county clerk and county judge. The last position he held eight years. In 1847 he was a delegate from this county to the constitutional convention. Judge Church was a member of the general assembly in 1862; a member of the state board of charities in 1868; and was one of the commissioners chosen by the government to locate a bridge at Rock Island. Judge Church died June 21, 1892. He builded wisely for the educational and moral welfare of Rockford. Mrs. Church and daughters, Mrs. Katharine Keeler and Miss Mary Preston, reside on the family estate on South Avon street. The title to this property has not changed in more than half a century.

Abiram and Mary Morgan left their home in Massachusetts in September on a visit to this western country. They were charmed with the Rock river valley, and determined to settle here. They purchased a quarter section of Nathaniel Loomis, and erected a small log house on almost the exact site of the spacious old Horsman mansion. Mr. Morgan also purchased section twenty-two, which was originally an Indian "float." Mr. Morgan possessed a competence, which became the basis of a large estate for his family. His religious sympathies were with

the Baptist church. As soon as Mr. and Mrs. Morgan had established their home, they desired that it should be shared by their only daughter and her husband. This daughter, previous to the departure of her parents from Massachusetts, was a young school girl attending Charleston seminary, where she formed an acquaintance which led to her romantic marriage. Charles I. Horsman was then a young man in business in Boston. It was an instance of mutual love at first sight, and they were married February 10, 1834, when the bride was nineteen years of age. Mr. and Mrs. Horsman took their departure from the east soon after the arrival of her parents in Rockford. They came by way of Pittsburg, thence by the Ohio and the Mississippi rivers to St. Louis, thence overland to Rockford. Mrs. Horsman has given a vivid picture of their reception at the parental home. As the shades of night were falling, on the second day of December, they reached Rockford, on the east side of the river. They were cold, hungry, weary and disheartened. The river was full of floating ice, so that the ferry was not available; but a man agreed to row them across in a small boat, and they eagerly assented. Then they walked up from the river arm in arm, through the stately oaks, until they came to the home where the young wife's parents were waiting to receive them. In referring to that incident in later years, Mrs. Horsman said that as the door was thrown open to welcome the daughter and her husband, when the flood of light threw out its rays into the night, and the aroma of hot coffee greeted their keen senses, it seemed as if the gates of Paradise had been opened to them. On this very site Mrs. Horsman resided until her death in 1889. Mr. Horsman died March 2, 1875.

Sampson George, an English gentleman, came to this county in September. In his youth Mr. George had been educated in the profession of the law, in the office of his father; but he had a decided preference for agricultural pursuits. Mr. George purchased a claim of eight hundred and eighty acres of land, held by Joshua Fawcett. Five weeks after his arrival Mr. George was taken ill and died October 31st, leaving a widow and five children. He was buried on his farm southeast of the village. Later the remains were removed to the West side cemetery.

Charles Henry Richings, M. D., was the second resident physician. He followed very closely Dr. Moulthrop. Dr. Richings was born in England, February 26, 1815. He received his medical education in Belgium, and settled in Rockford July



18. The practice of his profession and his investments returned him a comfortable fortune. Dr. Richings was a communicant of the Episcopal church. His death occurred August 13, 1884. His widow resides on the homestead on West State street. His son, Dr. C. H. Richings, is a well known practitioner.

Bethuel Houghton came from New Hampshire, in October. He engaged in the bakery business, and at one time he was associated in this way with Ephraim Wyman. Mr. Houghton left reminiscences in manuscript, which have been of service in the preparation of this volume.

Hiram R. Enoch was a native of Warren county, Ohio. From there he removed with his parents to Will county, Illinois, and thence he came to Guilford township. Probably no citizen of Rockford possessed a larger fund of local history than did Mr. Enoch, and he rendered valuable assistance in the preparation of historical articles. Mr. Enoch was county treasurer eight years. His best known work was as editor and proprietor of the *Rockford Journal*. After his removal from Rockford Mr. Enoch was in the employ of the government, in the pension bureau. His death occurred at Washington, D. C.

Isaac Newton Cunningham was the first of four brothers to settle in this county. He was the second sheriff of Winnebago county, and held this office four years. He died in Rockford December 24, 1865. His name will frequently appear in later chapters.

Jacob and Mary Posson came from Schoharie county, New York. In 1837 Mr. Posson purchased land four miles east of Rockford, upon which he lived five years. In 1842 he bought property on the northeast corner of Second and Market streets. While building a cooper shop on this site he received injuries from which he died November 1, 1842. His son, H. A. Posson, has resided in the county sixty-two years, and has probably lived in Rockford township longer than any other resident except Mrs. Thatcher Blake. Mr. Posson was wounded at the battle of Shiloh, April 6, 1862, and his arm was amputated the following week. He was in the local mail service four years from 1890, under Postmaster Lawler.

David S. Shumway came in the spring, and settled on a farm in New Milford. He was a native of Vermont. The family was known as Green Mountain Yankees, and was of Huguenot descent. One son, R. G. Shumway, was born in Vermont; R. B. Shumway is a native of Ohio; three sons, Alvaro, Roland H.,



and Monroe, were born on the old farm in New Milford; also three daughters, who died young during the sickly seasons of early days. Roland H. Shumway has acquired a national reputation as a seedsman, and has amassed a large fortune.

Nathaniel Loomis and his son, H. W. Loomis, came from New Jersey. Other settlers in the county were: Charles Works, Alonzo Corey, Charles P. Brady, Spooner Ruggles, Henry P. Redington, Jonathan Wilson, A. G. Spaulding, Scott Robb, Numan Campbell, John Peffers, Heman Campbell, Homer Denton, John Robb, Edward Smith, Joseph Ritchie, Herman Hoit, Martin W. Borst, Philip Culver, Thomas Williams, Joseph Vance, Austin Andrews, Edmund Whittlesey, Joseph Miner, Albert Fancher, Eli Burbank, Mr. Barnaby, and Miss Danforth, a sister of Mrs. Israel Morrill, and who became the wife of D. A. Spaulding, the first government surveyor of northern Illinois.

John Greenlee and John Armour, from Campbelltown, Argyleshire, Scotland, settled in the spring of this year at Harlem, and formed the nucleus from which has grown the large and flourishing colony known as the Scotch Settlement.

## CHAPTER X.

JOHN C. KEMBLE: THE FIRST LAWYER.—OTHER SETTLERS OF 1837.

THE emigration of 1837 was equal to that of the preceding year. John C. Kemble was the first lawyer who practiced in this county. Mr. Kemble and Dr. Goodrich had offices on South Madison street, directly below Potter & Preston's store. Mr. Kemble's log house was built near the northwest corner of First and Walnut streets. Mr. Kemble was a gentleman of ability, and had been a member of the general assembly of New York from Rensselaer county. Mrs. Kemble was a member of one of the old Dutch families in New York. According to the custom of the day, a colored servant was assigned the duty of ministering to her comfort. Her maiden name was Potts, and she met and married Mr. Kemble in Chicago. Her servant, Isaac Wilson, familiarly known as "Black Ike," came to Rockford with Mrs. Kemble in the latter part of 1837. It has been said that he was a slave at this time; but such was not the fact. When Isaac was a boy slavery was abolished in New York by an act of gradual emancipation, and he became free at a certain age. He had become so attached to the family in the east that he voluntarily followed Miss Potts to Chicago, thence to Rockford, where he resumed his duties as a servant. These statements are made on the authority of the late Harvey H. Silsby, who boarded with the Kemble family in the spring of 1839. About this time ex-Governor Marcy and wife of New York were guests at the Kemble home. Mr. Marcy had been governor three consecutive terms, and had attracted attention as a member of the United States senate by his reply to Henry Clay's assault on Van Buren, and by his answer to Daniel Webster's speech on the apportionment. The Governor came to Rockford with his own handsome team and carriage, and his drives about the country with the Kembles were notable inci-

dents in the social life of the village. Mr. Kemble became insane, and in 1840 he was taken to an eastern asylum, where he died a short time afterward. Mr. Kemble had two sons. Albert, the elder, was an artist. He went to Italy for study, where he married, and died. Edward became an editor, and founded the *California Star*, the first English newspaper in San Francisco. For many years after the death of Mr. Kemble, "Black Ike" had a fruit and lunch counter on North Madison street, and is well remembered by old residents.

John Lake was born March 27, 1821, in Selworthy Parish, England. His father died when he was quite young, and he was early thrown upon his own resources. When sixteen years of age he determined to follow his uncle, Thomas Lake, to America, and arrived in Rockford about December 1st. After three years on a farm, Mr. Lake spent a year as an apprentice to the carpenter's trade, under Thomas Thatcher. At the expiration of that time he began the business of contractor and builder on his own account. In the winter of 1852-53 Mr. Lake formed a partnership with the late Phineas Howes, in the lumber trade. The firm's yard was on the site of the Chicago & Northwestern passenger depot on the East side. After the railroad bridge was completed across the river, the firm removed its yard to the West side, near the present Northwestern freight depot. The business was continued there until the summer of 1856, when it was sold to Mr. Freeman. In November of that year Mr. Lake revisited his native country. He returned in February, 1857, and early in the following spring he again embarked in the lumber business, on the southeast corner of State and Third streets, with his former partner, Mr. Howes. This partnership was dissolved in the autumn of 1859, by the sale of the stock to Cook & Brother, lumber dealers on the West side. From 1860 to 1868 Mr. Lake was a partner with the late Henry Fisher, in the lumber business on the West side. In May, 1867, Mr. Lake again revisited England, and after an extended tour of the continent he returned in the autumn of the same year. In the spring of 1868 Mr. Lake and Seely Perry formed a partnership in the lumber trade, on the corner of Third and State streets, which was continued until 1874. The residences of these gentlemen were built from nearly the same plans. In 1874, and again in 1877, 1889 and 1891, Mr. Lake revisited Europe. Mr. Lake was connected with the Rockford Insurance Company from its organization in 1866 until its sale in 1899.



He was its first vice-president, and served in that capacity until January, 1866. when he was chosen president to succeed Dr. Robert P. Lane. Mr. Lake served the Second ward as alderman ten years ending with 1883. He has been a supervisor, and chairman of the board of education. For sixty-two years Mr. Lake has been known as a man of affairs, of strict integrity and exceptional executive ability; he is a self-made man. Mr. Lake and Seely Perry own the three-story brick block on the northeast corner of State and Second streets. October 11, 1849, Mr. Lake married Miss Almeda M. Danley, of Harlem. Three of their seven children died in infancy. Those surviving are: Mrs. William H. Crocker, of Evanston; and Mrs. Charles M. Clark, Mrs. William M. Prentice, and Frank L., of Rockford. Mr. Lake is a prominent Odd Fellow, and has served as grand master of the grand lodge of Illinois, and representative to the sovereign grand lodge of the United States for six consecutive years. Mr. Lake is an attendant at the First Congregational church.

Henry Thurston and his son, John H., then a lad thirteen years of age, arrived in March. In company with William P. Dennis, of Massachusetts, they had come from Troy, New York, by sleigh and wagon to Chicago. There they met Daniel S. Haight and Benjamin T. Lee, of Rockford, both of whom had known the elder Thurston in the east; and they persuaded the party to settle in Rockford. While in Chicago they met John C. Kemble, who had made the journey by stage from Troy, and the company reached Rockford soon afterward. The son grew to manhood and continuously resided in Rockford until the death of his wife in 1890. Mr. and Mrs. Thurston resided more than forty years in the brick house on South Madison street, which has been used for several years as an annex for the high school. Mr. Thurston published his *Reminiscences* in 1891. They are a valuable contribution to local history. Mr. Thurston was uneducated in the learning of the schools; nevertheless he had a retentive memory, a ready wit, and a natural aptitude for writing that have made his little volume of *Reminiscences* quite popular with all classes of readers. He has graphically portrayed that circle of pioneer social life in which he moved. Mr. Thurston died September 19, 1896.

William P. Dennis was a well known citizen, who held several minor offices. He first lived in a log house on the site of Dr. Catlin's residence, on South First street. Mr. Dennis died in Rockford, February 4, 1880.

Samuel D. Preston came from New York. He traveled overland from Medina, with his wife and one child. He lived on North Madison street, and later his home was on the site of the office of the Rockford Lumber and Fuel Company. Mr. Preston was prominent in the early business and political life of the community. He was county treasurer four years. Mr. Preston died February 11, 1844. He was the father of Mrs. L. J. Clark, deceased; Miss Anna T. Preston, deceased; and Miss Mary Preston, a resident of the city. Mr. Clark, his son-in-law, built the old stone house on the southwest corner of Madison and Oak streets.

Eleazer Hubble Potter was born in Fairfield county, Connecticut, and emigrated with his parents to western New York when he was about seventeen years of age. Mr. Potter was fully committed to the New England idea that the church and the school-house form the real basis of the prosperity of a city. He therefore took an active interest in building up its religious and educational institutions. Mr. Potter made the acquaintance of Samuel D. Preston at Medina, and when these gentlemen came to Rockford they formed a partnership in business. Mr. Potter afterward became a prominent banker. He built the house now occupied by Rev. Mead Holmes, who has enlarged and otherwise improved it. He also built the fine residence of Hon. Gilbert Woodruff. Mr. Potter died at his home in this city, September 1, 1861, at the age of fifty-five years. He was the father of Mrs. William Lathrop, and Commodore Potter, who resides with his daughter, Mrs. Sabin, at Belvidere.

Nathaniel Wilder was born in Lancaster, Massachusetts, June 30, 1794. From his native state he removed to Keene, New Hampshire, and from there he came to Rockford with his family, in March. He opened a blacksmith shop in a log building on South Main street, between Green and Cedar streets, and owned considerable property in that vicinity. Mr. Wilder was probably the third blacksmith in Rockford. He continued in this business twenty-five years, and then engaged in the coal trade. At one time he was a member of the Second Congregational church, but his later faith was Unitarianism. He died July 11, 1884, at the age of ninety years.

George W. Brinckerhoff came to Rockford during this year. He was in partnership with Germanicus Kent in various business enterprises. Although Mr. Brinckerhoff was quite prominent at one time, little is known of his later life.



Goodyear Asa Sanford was born in Hamden, Connecticut, in August, 1814. He was engaged in farming in the east until he came to Alton, Illinois, in December, 1836. In the following year he came to Rockford and engaged in mercantile business. Mr. Sanford always took an active interest in politics, and was one of the early sheriffs of the county. He was also school commissioner from 1845 to 1847. Mr. Sanford was a member of the banking firm of Dickerman, Wheeler & Co., which began business January 1, 1855. The firm name was changed the next year to Lane, Sanford & Co. The Second National Bank was organized April 29, 1864, with Mr. Sanford as cashier. He succeeded to the presidency, which he held at the time of his death, March 16, 1894. As a banker and man of affairs, Mr. Sanford was very prominent for more than half a century.

Rev. John Morrill and wife made their home in the little village in February. Mr. Morrill's important work in stimulating the religious life of the community will be considered in a subsequent chapter. Mrs. Morrill was eminently fitted for the work to which she was called.

David D. Alling was born at Westfield, Connecticut, April 27, 1813. At seventeen years of age he began an apprenticeship to the carpenter's trade. He came to Rockford in October, upon the advice of G. A. Sanford. Mr. Alling built a number of dwellings in the little village, and was a contractor during his entire active life in Rockford. He constructed the old First Congregational church, on the West side. He owned valuable property on South Main street. Mr. Alling died August 1, 1898. He was the father of Mrs. P. W. Danky and Frank Alling.

John Beattie was one of the first emigrants from Ireland to this county. He was born of Scotch ancestry in the north of Ireland, June 21, 1811. He learned the carpenter's trade in his native country, and continued this occupation after his settlement in Rockford. He was successful in business, and became the owner of a beautiful site in the finest residence portion of the city, which is now the home of his daughters, Misses Mary I. and Anna. Several business houses on West State street also belong to his estate. These valuable lots were tendered him in payment for work on the old court house, more than half a century ago. Mr. Beattie at first refused them; and it is said he wept the day he became their possessor, because he felt that he had been defrauded. Mr. Beattie was highly esteemed for his sterling character. He was reared in the Presbyterian



faith, although he was not a member of any church at the time of his death. Mr. Beattie died December 3, 1889. Mrs. Beattie died December 7, 1891. Two sons, Edward W. and George D., reside in Montana. Two sons and a daughter are deceased.

John Platt was born in West Haven, Connecticut, March 8, 1813. He came from Alton, Illinois, to Rockford in May, and engaged in mercantile business. In 1839 he removed to Pecatonica township and became an extensive land-owner. He returned to Rockford in 1845, where he resided until his death in 1881. Some years later Mrs. Platt married Robert H. Cotton. She passed her eighty-fifth year, December 11, 1899.

Benjamin Kilburn was born in Belchertown, Massachusetts, August 8, 1808. He settled permanently in Rockford in 1837. He had visited the county the preceding year, selected a place for a home, procured lumber for a house, engaged a man to build it, and then went back to Massachusetts to adjust his affairs. Upon his return to Rockford he was accompanied by Mrs. Kilburn's brother, Henry Maynard. Mr. Kilburn's first house was on the site of the Hotel Nelson, where it stood until 1891. Mr. Kilburn subsequently purchased a quarter-section in the northwestern part of the city. Mr. and Mrs. Kilburn had seven children. Five died in infancy or early youth. Edward B., a son, enlisted in the Seventy-fourth Illinois Volunteers, and died in the hospital at Murfreesborough, in 1863. Mr. Kilburn opened a stone quarry on his place, which proved valuable, and is still operated by his son-in-law, T. W. Carrico. Kilburn avenue was named in honor of Mr. Kilburn. He died in 1860. Some years later Mrs. Kilburn married Mr. Fales. She died in the summer of 1899.

John Miller, with his wife and three sons, Jacob B., Thomas and George, arrived about the middle of May. Jacob was better known as "Old Jake." He was the second resident lawyer, and as a forcible speaker he was in great demand by the Whigs of this section in the exciting campaign of 1840.

Among other settlers in the county during the year were: Isaac Toms, William Twogood, Elisha A. Kirk, William Jones, William Peters, Richard S. Stiles, Eli Hall, Levi Taft, Hiram Richardson, Simeon Harmon, Lewis Keith, P. S. Doolittle, Joseph Hayes, Seth Palmer, and his daughter, Mrs. William Conick, who has resided in the county sixty-two years.

The late Judge Church is authority for the statement that the population of the county in June, 1837, was 1,086.

## CHAPTER XI.

### ORGANIZATION OF THE COUNTY.—THE FIRST ELECTION.

IN the summer and autumn of 1835 the settlers in this section began to agitate the question of local government. This matter was promptly brought to the attention of the state legislature.

The counties organized in northern Illinois prior to 1835 were much larger than they are at present. At that time Cook, LaSalle and Jo Daviess counties extended from Lake Michigan to the Mississippi river. Jo Davies was organized in 1827. It then extended east of Rock river, and included the territory now comprised in nine counties. This singular name for the county was not given by the citizens. The name designated in the original bill was Ludlow, in honor of the naval hero of that name. A member of the legislature moved to strike out the word Ludlow, and insert the name Daviess, in honor of Colonel Jo Daviess, who fell at Tippecanoe. Another member facetiously moved to amend the amendment by inserting before Daviess the word "Jo." The reason assigned was the fact that there was a member of the house by the name of *Davis*, and that the people might think the honor was intended for him; and that it would be indelicate for the house, by any act, to transmit his name to posterity, as a precedent. This motion prevailed; the senate concurred in the amendment, and thus the county officially received the name of Jo Daviess. This immense tract of wild, unpopulated country extended eastward to the third principal meridian, and has been reduced in size by the organization of eight other counties.

Cook and LaSalle counties were organized in 1831. It was the evident intention at that time to subdivide these counties at a later day, to meet the demands of an increased population. A map of Illinois, printed in 1835, owned by the late

Hon. Ephraim Sumner, and now in possession of his son, Hon. E. B. Sumner, represents Cook county with territory attached on the north for judicial purposes. La Salle has northern territory annexed for the same purpose, corresponding to portions of McHenry, Kane, Winnebago and Ogle counties, and all of Boone and DeKalb, as at present organized. Jo Daviess is shown with annexed territory on the east and south. The distinction between Cook and LaSalle counties proper, and their annexed portions, appears to have been in the fact that the former were surveyed, while the latter were not. Although Jo Daviess county was organized eight years before Mr. Sumner's map was printed, the map does not even represent the county as surveyed. The conditions, however, in Jo Daviess were peculiar. The country near Galena included a mining camp, with quite a considerable population, and thus required a local government. Hence the organization of the county preceded by several years the government survey of the land.

The state legislature at that time held its sessions at Vandalia. An act, approved and in force January 16, 1836, provided for the organization of McHenry, Winnebago, Kane, Ogle and Whiteside counties, and the reorganization of Jo Daviess. Section two of the law created Winnebago county, with boundaries as follows: "Commencing at the southeast corner of township number forty-three, range number four, east of the third principal meridian, and running thence west to the said meridian; thence north along the line of said meridian, to the southeast corner of township number twenty-six, in range number eleven, east of the fourth principal meridian; thence west to the dividing line between ranges number seven and eight; thence north along said line to the northern boundary of the state; thence east along said boundary line to the northeast corner of range number four, east of the third principal meridian; thence south to the place of beginning."

Winnebago was thus formed from the attached portions of Jo Daviess and LaSalle counties. That part of the county east of the third principal meridian was taken from LaSalle; the portion west of this meridian was detached from Jo Daviess. As at first organized, Winnebago county was almost exactly double its present size, and included all of Boone county, and the eastern two township ranges of what is now Stephenson county. Winnebago has never been enlarged or reduced from its original form on its northern or southern boundary.



Section nine of the law to establish the county ordered an election to be held at the house of Germanicus Kent, on the first Monday in May, for sheriff, coroner, recorder, surveyor, and three county commissioners, who should hold their offices until the next succeeding general election, and until their successors were qualified. The election, however, was not held until the next August.

No county created by this act was to be organized, and an election held, until a majority of the voters of the prospective county had addressed a petition for the same to the judge of the sixth judicial circuit, or, in his absence, to another circuit judge. The voters were also required to give sufficient proof that the proposed county contained not less than three hundred and fifty white inhabitants. This task was undertaken by Dr. Daniel H. Whitney, who had settled at Belvidere. As the first census enumerator, Dr. Whitney diligently spied out the land, and discovered the requisite number of "white inhabitants."

These facts were communicated to Judge Thomas H. Ford. He thereupon issued an order, dated July 15, 1836, for an election to be held at the house of Daniel S. Haight, on the first Monday in August. The ninth section of the statute had designated an earlier date and another place for this election; but inasmuch as the organization of the county depended upon a prescribed population, a subsequent section of the law necessarily referred the time and place of such election to the presiding judge of the circuit. Under the first constitution of Illinois, all elections for state and county officers were held the first Monday in August. The time of these elections was changed by the second constitution, in 1847, to the Tuesday next after the first Monday in November. Germanicus Kent, Joseph P. Griggs and Robert J. Cross were chosen judges of election. Judge Ford's order has been framed, and is preserved in the office of Captain Lewis F. Lake, the circuit clerk, as an interesting relic of those early days.

It has been said that politics and religion are the chief concerns of men. The "iron pen of history" must record the fact that politics then had the right of way for the time. The prospective election awakened intense enthusiasm. The electors were to vote also for a member of congress and two representatives in the state legislature. But the special interest centered in the selection of three candidates for county commis-

sioners. Kentville and Haightville, as the West and the East side settlements were respectively called, had already become strong rivals. The Guelphs and Ghibellines, in the mediæval Florentine republic, did not more earnestly strive for supremacy. No caucus or convention was called, and the factions informally divided the honors. Simon P. Doty, who had settled in Belvidere in 1835, was the candidate for commissioner for that part of the county. Thomas B. Talcott was the northern candidate. Mr. Haight was anxious to have the third elected from this bailiwick, but he was obliged to yield this point to his West side rival, who placed William E. Dunbar in the field.

The election was held on Monday, August 1st, in a decidedly primitive manner. Written or printed ballots had not then been introduced into Illinois. Under the old constitution, all votes were to be given *vive voce* until otherwise provided by the general assembly; and up to this time no change had been made. This method kept the interest at a high pitch, and enabled the voters to tell at any moment the relative strength of the several candidates. It is a gigantic stride from the *vive voce* vote of 1836 to the Australian ballot of today. At that time there was not a copy of the Illinois statutes in the county to direct the judges of election in the discharge of their duties. Mr. Kent, however, knew something of the election laws of Virginia and Alabama, Robert J. Cross was familiar with those of New York and Michigan, and Mr. Griggs was acquainted with the laws of Ohio. The election, therefore, was not allowed to go by default for so slight a cause as ignorance of the laws of their adopted state. D. A. Spaulding had some acquaintance with the laws of Illinois, and he was made one of the clerks of election, and entrusted with the duty of making the poll-books. Simon P. Doty, Thomas B. Talcott and William E. Dunbar were elected county commissioners; Daniel S. Haight, sheriff; Daniel H. Whitney, recorder; Eliphalet Gregory, coroner; and D. A. Spaulding, surveyor. The results of the election for member of congress and representatives in the general assembly are given in a subsequent chapter devoted to this subject.

One hundred and twenty votes were cast at this election. The names of the voters were as follows: David Caswell, George Caswell, David Barnes, P. P. Burnham, Thomas Crane, Thatcher Blake, Seth Scott, Joshua Fawcett, John Barrett, Jeremiah Frame, John F. Thayer, William Randall, John Welch, Joshua Cromer, John Slavins, David Blake, William Barlow, Joseph



B. Baker, Daniel Fairechild, Livingston Robins, Alfred Shattuck, Alva Trask, William Smith, Ira Haskins, John Bunts, Simon P. Doty, Milton S. Mason, Timothy Caswell, Charles H. Pane, Royal Briggs, Solomon Watson, Abram Watson, Ralzimond Gardner, Mason Sherburne, John K. Towner, John G. Lockridge, John Allen, John Lovesse, A. E. Courtright, Henry Enoch, Ephraim Sumner, S. Brown, A. R. Dimmick, Samuel Hicks, H. M. Wattles, T. R. J. English, Oliver Robins, J. P. Griggs, Aaron V. Taylor, Luke Joslin, William Sumner, David D. Elliott, John Handy, Jacob Pettyjohn, Daniel S. Haight, Jacob Keyt, John Lefonton, John Kelsoe, William R. Wheeler, M. Ewing, Charles Works, Sidney Twogood, Phineas Churchill, Thomas B. Talcott, Austin Andrews, Thomas Lake, Benjamin McConnell, Benjamin DePue, Lewis Haskins, Aaron B. Davis, Joel Pike, R. M. Waller, Julius Trask, William Carey, Ephraim Wyman, P. D. Taylor, William Brayton, Israel Morrill, Harlyn Shattuck, David DeWitt, James B. Young, Abel Thurston, John Kaudler, John Adams, Milton Kilburn, Richard H. Enoch, Joseph Chadwick, Daniel Piper, John Hance, Henry Enoch, Jr., Peter Moore, Sylvester Sutton, V. B. Rexford, William G. Blair, Daniel H. Whitney, James Jackson, Isaac Adams, Isaac Harrell, E. A. Nixon, John Wood, William Mead, Joseph Rogers, A. C. Gleason, Henry Hicks, John Brink, E. Gregory, L. C. Waller, James Thomas, G. Kent, Chauncey Mead, George Randall, W. H. Talcott, William E. Dunbar, S. A. Lee, Charles Reed, Carles Sayres, Robert J. Cross, D. A. Spaulding, Benjamin White, Jacob Enoch. The votes of two men, John Langdon and Thomas Williams, were rejected. Not a single voter of this list is now living. The last survivor was Harlyn Shattuck, who died in 1899, near Belvidere.

On Wednesday, August 3d, the county commissioners-elect met in special session at the house of Daniel S. Haight, for the transaction of business necessary to complete the local government. Each commissioner administered the oath of office to the other. Lots were drawn for the terms of one year, and two and three years respectively. D. A. Spaulding was elected clerk of the county commissioners' court; and Robert J. Cross was chosen treasurer. William E. Dunbar was sent to Vandalia, the capital of the state, with the election returns. The term *court* might seem to imply that this body possessed judicial powers, but such was not the fact. Under the constitution of 1818, three commissioners were elected in each county for the



transaction of all its business. This court performed the duties and exercised powers corresponding in a general way to those entrusted under the present law to the board of supervisors.

At this first session of the court the commissioners divided the county into seven precincts, as follows: Yellow River, which included the towns of Silver Creek, Ridot, Freeport, Lancaster, and the south half of Rock River, in Stephenson county; Rock Grove, which included the north half of Rock River, all of Buck Eye, Rock Grove, and the east half of Oneco, in Stephenson county, and Laona and Howard (now Durand) in Winnebago; Peeketolika, corresponding to the towns of Seward, Lysander (now Pecatonica) and Burritt; Kishwaukee, now the townships of Cherry Valley, New Milford, and part of Rockford township; Rockford, which included the present townships of Winnebago, Guilford, the larger part of Rockford, and the south half of Owen and Harlem; Rock River, including the townships of Shirland, Harrison, Rockton, Roscoe, north half of Owen and Harlem, and Manchester in Boone county; Belvidere, which included all of Boone county except Manchester township. This precinct contained two hundred and fifty-two square miles; yet at the first presidential election in 1836, it could poll only twenty-three votes. Rock River precinct was twenty-four miles in length, and from six to twelve in width, and included six townships. At the presidential election previously mentioned this immense territory could poll but twenty votes. The number of precincts was subsequently increased to ten.

At this session of the court an order was issued, which fixed the time and place of holding an election in each precinct, for justices of the peace and constables. The date chosen was August 27. In only three of these precincts, however, were elections held on that day. In Belvidere John K. Towner and John S. King were elected justices of the peace, and Abel Thurston and Mason Sherburne, constables. In Rock River, Sylvester Talcott and Robert J. Cross were elected justices of the peace, and John P. Parsons and D. A. Blake, constables. In Peeketolika, Ephraim Sumner and Isaac Hance were chosen justices, and William Sumner and Thomas Hance, constables. These justices were the first judicial officers in the county. A second election for the four remaining precincts was ordered to be held October 14th. Upon the election of these officers at this time the county organization was completed. There was as yet no county seat. The act to establish the county, however, had

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provided that until public buildings should be erected for the purpose, the courts should be held at the house of Daniel S. Haight or Germanicus Kent, as the county commissioners should direct.

The first claims against the county were presented at this session. Germanicus Kent, Robert J. Cross and J. P. Griggs, as judges of election, and D. A. Spaulding and S. A. Lee, as clerks, were allowed one dollar each. D. A. Spaulding was allowed fifty cents for stationery furnished for poll-books.

## CHAPTER XII.

### LOCATION OF THE COUNTY SEAT AT WINNEBAGO.

THE law establishing Winnebago county designated Robert Stephens and Rezin Zarley, of Cook county, and John Phelps, of Jo Daviess, as commissioners, to locate the permanent seat of justice. These commissioners, or a majority of them, were authorized to meet on the first Monday in May, 1836, or as soon thereafter as may be, at the house of Daniel S. Haight, for the discharge of their duty. John Phelps never made his appearance. The other two commissioners met July 14th, at the place specified by law, for the selection of a site for the county buildings.

At the county commissioners' court on Thursday, August 4, 1836, the report of the special commissioners was presented. The reader will avoid confusion by noting the distinction between the three county commissioners elected by popular vote, and the special commissioners designated by the statute to locate the county seat. The latter reported that on the 14th day of July they had met at the house of Daniel S. Haight, and that two days later they had selected a site on lands owned by Nicholas Boilvin & Co., on condition that the proprietors should execute a warranty deed to the county of thirty acres of land, so long as it should remain the seat of justice. On the same day Charles Reed presented to the county commissioners a deed of twelve blocks, containing two and one-half acres each, situated about two miles up the river from the ferry crossing.

The law was very specific concerning the location of a site. It provided that if the site chosen should be the property of individuals, instead of government land, the owners thereof should make a deed in fee simple of not less than twenty acres of said tract to the county; or in lieu thereof they should pay the county three thousand dollars, to be used in the erection of county buildings. Mr. Reed may have presented his deed in



good faith, but it was not accepted because it contained an objectionable clause to the effect that the county should hold the property "so long as it should remain the seat of justice." This reservation defeated his scheme.

This tract of land came into possession of Nicholas Boilvin about one year previous. Mr. Boilvin was at one time a government agent for the Winnebago Indians. These several transfers of this property form an interesting chapter of local history. It was noted in Chapter III. that by the treaty negotiated at Prairie du Chien, August 1, 1829, between the United States and the Winnebagoes, grants of land were made to certain descendants of this tribe. Catherine Myott, a half-breed Indian woman, was one of the two who had received two sections each. Previous to this contest over the county seat, one of these two unlocated sections had been sold to Henry Gratiot. By a deed executed August 25, 1835, Catherine Myott conveyed the other unlocated section to Nicholas Boilvin for eight hundred dollars. This was the first individual conveyance of land in Winnebago county. This deed was filed for record in Cook county, September 3, 1835, and recorded by Daniel H. Whitney, recorder of Winnebago county, September 8, 1836. This instrument was the first filed for record in this county. The tract located for Mr. Boilvin, by virtue of the treaty of 1829, is the east half of section fourteen and all that part of section thirteen west of Rock river, in Rockford township, and contains six hundred and thirty-seven acres. At the time Mr. Reed made the offer of his deed to the county commissioners, the property belonged to Nicholas Boilvin, of Chicago, Charles Reed, of Joliet, and Major Campbell.

As soon as the organization of the county began to be agitated, Boilvin and his associates determined to secure the location of the county seat on their site. The entire tract was platted September 14, 1836. It was known as Nicholas Boilvin's plat of the town of Winnebago, and the plat was filed for record September 17, 1836. Reed appeared as the principal manager. There were two hundred and fifty-one blocks, and these were subdivided into two thousand four hundred and thirty-six lots. The streets were uniformly eighty-two and one-half feet wide, and bore north and south, east and west. The lots were forty-nine and one-half feet front, and one hundred and thirteen feet and nine inches deep, except the lots in the water blocks, which ran back from Water street to low-water mark. The alleys

were twenty feet wide. The town was christened Winnebago. Reed built a two-story house, to be used as a hotel and store, which is still standing a few rods above John H. Sherratt's new residence. A free ferry was established; a lime-kiln and a blacksmith shop were built; and a road opened through the timber east from Winnebago, to meet the state road from Chicago to Galena, at a point on Beaver creek. Nothing was left undone to secure the county seat; but the decision of the commissioners, like the law of the Medes and Persians, could not be changed.

Notwithstanding the fact that the special commissioners were given full power by the statute to locate the county seat, their selection was arbitrarily set aside by the commissioners' court. This rejection, however, was based upon a reason which would have been considered valid by any court. The question did not again come before the people until 1839. Pending the location of the county seat, the commissioners ordered that the circuit and county commissioners' courts should be held at the house of Mr. Haight.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE FERRY.—EARLY STATE AND COUNTY ROADS.

THE ferry was the first mode of transit across the river. Ferries were established by special acts of the legislature, with regular charters, in territory not under county organization. The issue of licenses for conducting ferries came under the jurisdiction of the commissioners' courts in organized counties. In 1836, at the September session of this court for Winnebago county, Germanicus Kent was authorized to establish a ferry at Rockford, at what is now State street. He was required to pay a license of ten dollars for one year. Rates of ferriage were established as follows: For each carriage, wagon or cart, drawn by two horses, oxen or mules, sixty-two and one-half cents; the same drawn by one horse, thirty-seven and one-half cents; for each additional horse, twelve and one-half cents; for man and horse, twenty-five cents; each horse, mule, or head of cattle, twelve and one-half cents; hogs, sheep and goats per score, fifty cents; each footman, six and one-quarter cents. These terms were for transients. Farmers were given a yearly rate. Free ferriage was given to the citizens of the county after the village became incorporated. The proprietors were reimbursed from the village treasury.

At the same session of the court Vance & Andrews were authorized to establish a ferry at Winnebago, on the same terms for license and ferriage as given Mr. Kent. C. Doolittle, by his agent, H. M. Wattles, was granted the privilege of establishing a ferry where the line between Rockford and Owen townships crosses Rock river, on the same terms. In the spring of 1836, Harvey Lowe and Nelson H. Salisbury, who had made claims in Howard in the preceding autumn, returned with their families. May 18th they crossed the river at the point now spanned by Trask's bridge. They were the first to cross in the boat which had been launched that day. They had been detained there about a week, and during that time they had assisted in building the boat. This ferry, which was established through the agency of Love and Salisbury, to enable them to cross their



claims, subsequently became the thoroughfare in the direction of Mineral Point, and formed a convenient crossing for all emigrants to the country north of the Pecatonica.

In 1837 the ferry licenses of Kent and Vance were extended another year, at the same rates. Mr. Kent conducted the ferry at Rockford from 1836 to 1838. In the latter year a license was issued to Kent & Brinckerhoff. The rates of ferriage were changed and the license fee raised to twenty dollars. These gentlemen were succeeded by Selden M. Church, who continued the business until the first bridge was built.

Skiffs were used for carrying passengers, and a scow for horses and other property. A scow was made from the halves of large split logs hewn down to proper thickness, and planked in the ordinary manner. A large cable was stretched across the river, supported by posts on either side, which kept it in place. From the ends of the scow smaller ropes ran to pulley blocks running on the cable. By shortening one of these ropes and pushing the boat from the shore so that the current could strike it obliquely, the craft was given the required momentum, and the rapid current propelled it over. The scow could carry two teams at a time. Teams were driven upon the scow, and if any danger was apprehended from frightened horses, the driver would block a wheel to the scow with a chain. A platform at either end of the boat, supported by levers attached to each side, was lowered to the solid landing, and thus formed an easy entrance and exit. A railing at the sides and base at the ends insured perfect safety. The countersign was "Over!" which, with various repetitions and inflections, always preceded the starting of the boat.

There was a ferry-house on either side of the river. The ferryman resided in the one on the West side. It was a frame structure built on the site of the public library building, in 1839, by Allen & Brown, for Kent & Brinckerhoff. Its dimensions were fourteen by fourteen feet, one story, boarded up and down, with shingle roof. James Taylor, a bachelor, was the first ferryman. He was succeeded by Giles C. Hard, and he in turn by John Fisher, after whom Fisher avenue was named. He was a native of New Hampshire, a strong and muscular man, of strict integrity. Mr. Taylor was assisted by Asher Miller. Their combined strength was sometimes severely tested in getting a row-boat, loaded with passengers and mails, across through the ice, when the ferry-boat could not run.

When Germanicus Kent and Thatcher Blake made their settlements, there were no state roads in this vicinity. Indian trails wended their way through prairie and forest, but these did not greatly facilitate the travel of the white man. At that time Chicago and Galena were the only well known points in northern Illinois. The first settlements in the state were made in the southern portion; and as the tide of emigration poured from the east into the Rock river valley, after the Black Hawk war, each session of the legislature laid out a number of state roads.

By an act approved January 15, 1836, James Gifford, Daniel S. Haight and Josiah C. Goodhue were appointed special commissioners to view, survey and locate a road from Meacham's Grove, in Cook county, to Galena, in Jo Daviess county. The bill directed that the commissioners should make "Elgin on Fox river, in Cook county, Belvidere on Squaw Prairie, in the county of LaSalle, and Midway at the ford on Rock river, in the county of Jo Daviess, points on the said road, and shall fix the said road on the most advantageous ground, for a permanent road, having reference to said points." This road was opened without delay, and State street in Belvidere and in Rockford is a portion of this highway, which extends nearly across the state in a general northwesterly direction from Chicago.

By the same act David W. Whitney, Stephen Mack, and John P. Bradstreet were designated commissioners to locate a road from Belvidere to the mouth of Pecatonica river, at Macktown, which was named in his own honor by its founder, Stephen Mack. By an act of the legislature, approved March 2, 1839, Benjamin T. Lee, of Winnebago county, Ephraim Hall, of DeKalb, and Isaac Marlett, of Kane, were made commissioners to view, survey and locate "a state road from where a certain road terminates at the Will county line, to Aurora, on Fox river; thence, by the county seat of DeKalb county, Rockford, in Winnebago county, Trask's ferry, Pekatonikee; thence to the state line, in a direction towards Mineral Point. The said commissioners shall lay out a state road from the town of Winnebago, in Winnebago county, intersecting the State road in the direction to the Will county line." Mr. Marlett, the third commissioner, was the father of Mrs. O. F. Barbour, of Rockford. About 1839 Charles street was opened as a more direct route to Chicago, by way of St. Charles; hence the name. But it was of little value in this respect beyond Cherry Valley.

In March, 1839, an act of the legislature was approved, by which twenty-five thousand dollars were appropriated from the state internal improvement fund, which had been created two years before. This money was distributed among the northern counties. It was to be applied by the commissioners' courts of the counties receiving the same, exclusively to the construction of bridges, and the improvement of public roads in their respective counties. Winnebago county received three thousand one hundred and fourteen dollars and eighty-three cents, with the proviso that "the bridge across Cedar creek, on the State road leading by Bloomington to the mouth of the Pickatonike, and the improvements of the Great Western mail route or road from the east to the west line of Winnebago county, shall first be made and paid for from the sum appropriated to said county."

Upon the organization of the county, the commissioners devoted considerable attention to receiving petitions for the appointment of viewers to locate roads. The rapid settlement of the county, in a day preceding the railroad, demanded the best possible facilities for transportation. Every property-owner was anxious to secure a public road near his homestead; and was willing to give whatever land was necessary. The records of the county bear testimony to the fidelity with which the commissioners transacted this important business.



## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE VILLAGE CHRISTENED.—THE FIRST SURVEYS.

MR. KENT was in a sense the first proprietor of the colony. He gave it the name of *Midway*. This name, which is said to have been proposed by Mrs. Kent, was suggested by the fact that the settlement was about halfway from Chicago to Galena. "Midway, Rock River, Jo Daviess county, Illinois, June 17, 1835," is the name and date Mr. Kent gives in a letter to a friend. The law of 1836 which established the State road, noted in the last chapter, referred to "Midway at the ford on Rock river."

A letter written by Mr. Kent in the autumn of 1834, addressed to J. B. Martyn, of Alabama, directed that gentleman to "Midway" as follows: "At Galena call on my brother. From Galena go directly east until you come to and cross Apple river, thence turn in a southeasterly course to Plum river, and from there to Cherry Grove. There leave some timber on your left, and a small grove on your right [later known as Twelve-Mile Grove] and then keep on until you strike Rock river, from which a blind path will lead you to Midway." These instructions were about as definite as *Launcelot's* direction to the Jew's house, in the *Merchant of Venice*: "Turn up on your right hand at the next turning, but at the next turning of all, on your left; marry, at the very next turning, turn of no hand, but turn down indirectly to the Jew's house." Nevertheless, Mr. Martyn found Midway.

Under date of October 17, 1837, Mr. Kent writes a letter from *Rockford*. The settlement was therefore known as Midway from one to three years. It is said "a rose by any other name would smell as sweet;" but it is doubtful if the ambitious young community would have become the commercial and educational center of the Rock river valley, handicapped by the primitive name of Midway. The original proprietors early came to this conclusion. Authorities differ as to the origin of the name Rockford. One writer says the place was known as Rockford by the Indians; and that this name was suggested to them by nature. Upon the site of the present dam was a solid rock bottom, where the water was usually so shallow as to afford

easy crossing with their ponies. Hence it was called by them the *rock-ford*.

John H. Thurston gives a somewhat different, though not necessarily a conflicting, version. He says Daniel S. Haight, Germanicus Kent, William H. Gilman of Belvidere, John P. Chapin and Ebenezer Peck of Chicago, and Stephen Edgel, later of St. Louis, met at Dr. Goodhue's office, on Lake street, in Chicago, to name the claim, or mill privilege, which they hoped at some time would become a town. "Midway," though an appropriate name, was not in favor. Various names were suggested and rejected, until Dr. Goodhue said: "Why not call it ROCKFORD, from the splendid rock-bottom ford on the river there?" The suggestion seemed an inspiration, and was at once unanimously adopted; and from that day to this, Dr. Goodhue has been given the credit of the present name. The date of this christening is uncertain. Mr. Thurston says it occurred in the summer of 1835; but the statute of January, 1836, still designated it Midway. News traveled slowly, however, in those days; and possibly the solons at Vandalia had not learned of the change.

The first surveys in Winnebago county were made early in 1836. Don Alonzo Spaulding, a pioneer of 1835, was the government surveyor. One of his associates was Hon. Charles B. Farwell, of Chicago, who in 1886 succeeded the late General John A. Logan as a United States senator from Illinois. In October, 1835, Mr. Spaulding began the extension of the third principal meridian, at a timber corner about two miles north of the point where this meridian crosses the Illinois river, on the western boundary line of LaSalle county. Mr. Spaulding extended the third principal meridian north to its intersection with the Wisconsin boundary line. He then returned on the line to the corner of townships forty-one and forty-two north, range one east, and commenced the stand-line running east along the southern boundary of townships forty-two north, ranges one, two and three east; and then surveyed the range and township lines in these three ranges to the north line of the state. He subdivided townships forty-four and forty-six, Rockford and Rockton, before leaving the field in January, 1836. Mr. Spaulding resumed his surveys in the spring of that year, and subdivided township forty-five, range one east, and townships forty-four, forty-five and forty-six, ranges two and three east. In 1839, 1840, and 1841, under another contract, Mr. Spauld-



ing subdivided, in ranges ten and eleven, east of the fourth principal meridian, from the northern line of the state southward nearly thirty miles. It will thus be seen that Mr. Spaulding surveyed the range and township lines in all of Winnebago county, and the western range of Boone; and subdivided all of Winnebago except New Milford and Cherry Valley townships.

Mr. Spaulding, however, was not responsible for the fact that the streets of East and West Rockford do not squarely meet at the river. Mr. Spaulding stated that in January, 1836, Mr. Kent requested him to lay out two or three streets, parallel with the river, on the West side, as the beginning of his town. There were probably ten or twelve blocks, the corners of which were defined by stakes. This survey of blocks and streets was a personal transaction with Mr. Kent, and entirely separate from Mr. Spaulding's survey of townships and ranges for the government. In the spring of 1836 several persons interested in the east side of the river wished Mr. Spaulding to lay off the beginning of their town. After making a preliminary examination, he found that he could not make the front street or the street next the river, on the most suitable ground and have the cross streets correspond with the streets on the west side of the river. He then examined his work on the West side, and found that it could be changed so as to conform to the East side. At that time no improvements had been made which would have been affected by the prospective change; and a slight modification would have made the streets on the two sides of the river harmonize, as though there had been no river dividing the town. Mr. Spaulding explained to Mr. Kent the advantage of such harmony to both sides of the river; but Mr. Kent was unwilling to comply with his suggestions. Forty-five years later Mr. Spaulding made this explanation to relieve himself of the responsibility for the city streets as they now touch the river.

The rivalry between the two sides of the river could not be compromised. Nature provided that the river should be a bond of union in which there is strength; but the two factions made it a cause of division. Both Kent and Haight foresaw that the prosperity of Rockford would largely depend upon the development of the natural water-power; but neither would make any concession, even for the general good. William E. Dunbar had settled on the West Side in 1835; but he subsequently removed to the East side, purchased land of Mr. Haight, and joined him in a common rivalry against his former neighbor.



## CHAPTER XV.

### THE RISE OF METHODISM.—FIRST METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

It has been said that John Wesley gave one hundred and fifty thousand dollars to the poor, and at his death he left to the world two silver spoons and the Methodist church. The latter has proved a splendid legacy. Methodism has always been a pioneer. It received its baptism of divine energy in the days of John and Charles Wesley. George Whitefield caught the holy flame, and came to America to preach a more simple gospel to the common people. Methodism has since kept pace with the course of empire that westward takes its way.

Methodism was established in Winnebago county in 1836. It was therefore the vanguard of the church militant to enter and possess the land. The official record of the first society has not been preserved. It is an interesting fact that early and authentic information was given by Bishop Vincent thirty-five years ago. At that time he was pastor of the Court Street Methodist church. On Sunday, October 2, 1864, Rev. Vincent preached a sermon on Methodism in Rockford, which has been preserved. Thirty-five years ago there were living witnesses of the first effort to organize a Methodist church, and others who had seen the stately tree grow from the grain of mustard seed. This sermon is supplemented by an excellent historical address delivered by Rev. G. R. Vanhorne, D. D., August 6, 1882, in the Centennial Methodist church, which is on file in the records of that church. These sermons furnish the only available information concerning the first church organized in Winnebago county.

Galena was the first appointment within the bounds of the present Rock River conference. It was at that time, in 1829, in the Illinois conference, which comprised the states of Indiana and Illinois. The Indiana conference was formed in 1834. After this separation of Indiana from the Illinois conference, the latter still covered a vast region. In the autumn of 1835 Rev. William Royal was appointed to the Fox River mission. Rev. Samuel Pillsbury was associated with him. This mission circuit extended

northward from Ottawa. In June, 1836, Rev. Pillsbury preached a sermon at the home of Henry Enoch, in Guilford township, seven and one-half miles east of Rockford. This was the first service in the county conducted by a Methodist clergyman. On that occasion Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Beers and Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Gregory traveled six miles in a heavy lumber wagon drawn by a yoke of oxen. Verily, these godly pioneers were not carried to the skies, nor even to church, on "flowery beds of ease." Their religion cost them something; but they received manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting. This first service was followed during the summer by occasional sermons by Rev. Royal at Mr. Enoch's house; and Mrs. Enoch often prepared Sunday dinners for the congregation. On his way to conference at Springfield, in the autumn of 1836, Rev. Royal passed through Rockford. Monday afternoon, September 2d, he preached in Samuel Gregory's log house, which stood on what is now block fourteen in Gilbert Woodruff's Second Addition to Rockford. At the close of the sermon Rev. Royal organized the first Methodist class, which consisted of five persons: Samuel Gregory, Joanna Gregory, Mary Enoch, Daniel Beers and Mary Beers. These pioneer Methodists have been honored by five memorial front windows in Centennial church. Mr. Gregory and Mrs. Beers were living when Dr. Vanhorne prepared his memorial address seventeen years ago.

Rev. Vincent, in his sermon, made this reference to that humble beginning: "I visited a few days ago the remains of the old log house, scarcely a mile east of the river, and near the railroad, where this organization of Methodism took place. It was in an humble place, but in the midst of a glorious land and under a benignant heaven that this little germ was planted, and it has grown rapidly, and the five have become nearly a thousand who live under the shadow of Rockford Methodism today; and who can tell of the number who have gone up from the field of conflict into the temple of triumph?"

At the conference of 1836 Bishop Roberts appointed Dr. Arnold to the Sycamore circuit, of which Rockford was a part. The few Methodists gathered for worship as often as possible at Mr. Gregory's house. In 1837 the conference met at Rushville, when Bishop Roberts sent William Gaddis, with Robert Lane as assistant, to the Rockford circuit. This circuit belonged to the Chicago district, over which John Clark was presiding



elder. Mr. Lane soon retired from the field, and he was succeeded by Leander S. Walker. At the conference of 1838, at Alton, Bishop Soule returned Mr. Walker to Rockford as preacher in charge, with Nathan Jewett as assistant. During the early part of Mr. Walker's pastorate he preached in the house of James Boswell, north of the brewery. The Methodists subsequently worshipped in a building erected by Mr. Haight on the site of the American House. This building was used for various purposes. In the summer of 1838 the Methodists built a parsonage on First street, between Prairie street and Lafayette avenue, facing west. This was the first Methodist parsonage built within what is now the Rock River conference. Another memorable event occurred during this year. The first quarterly meeting was held late in the summer, in a barn belonging to Mr. Haight, near the intersection of State and Third streets, and is known in local history as the "stage barn." The services began on Saturday, and continued through Sunday. Bishop Morris presided at the conference held in Bloomington in 1839, and returned Nathan Jewett to Rockford as preacher in charge.

The Rock River conference was organized August 26, 1840, at Mt. Morris. Bishop Waugh presided over this conference, which was held in a grove. Rockford was retained in the Chicago district, with John T. Mitchell as presiding elder, and Semphronious H. Stocking as circuit preacher. August 25, 1841, the conference was held at Platteville, Wisconsin, when Bishop Morris sent John Crummer to Rockford. The Methodists were then holding services in the brick schoolhouse on the East side public square. The Universalists appointed their service at the same hour and place, and differences arose. The Methodists withdrew from the schoolhouse; the pastor removed his family "up-stairs," and finished the lower story of the parsonage as a chapel.

August 3, 1842, the conference met in Chicago, and Bishop Roberts assigned Rockford to the care of Silas Bolles. At this time the Methodist church was worshipping in what was afterward known as the "old seminary building." This structure had been begun as a Congregational church, but was abandoned for the church built on the West side by Kent and Brinckerhoff. In 1842 the Methodists bought this property of the county commissioners, and held it for some years.

September 20, 1842, the First Methodist church became an incorporate body, with five trustees, as follows: Horace Miller,



James B. Martyn, Samuel Gregory, Daniel Beers and Willard Wheeler. At the conference in Dubuque, Iowa, August 30, 1843, Rockford was made a "station," and Bishop Andrews sent Richard Blanchard. November 10th of that year the trustees of the society purchased of Daniel S. Haight the lot on which the parsonage had been built five years previous. The consideration was two hundred dollars. In 1849 the trustees sold the property to George Shearer, for three hundred dollars. The lot is now occupied by Thomas Sully's residence.

Nathaniel P. Heath succeeded Mr. Blanchard in 1844. He was sent by Bishop Morris, who presided at the conference in Milwaukee. In August, 1845, the conference met at Peoria, and Bishop Morris sent Charles D. Cahoon to Rockford. He filled this appointment only once, and died September 25th. His remains are buried in the Cedar Bluff cemetery. Of the fifty-eight pastors who were assigned to Rockford pulpits from 1836 to 1882, Mr. Cahoon is the only one who died among this people while in the pastorate. John Lucock was sent to fill out the term of Mr. Cahoon. During his pastorate the society resolved to build a church. December 6, 1845, a subscription paper was circulated. The quarterly conference had already appointed John Lucock, Willard Wheeler, G. O. Holmes, James B. Martyn, Horace Miller, Samuel Gregory, Edward Fitch, and Eliphalet Gregory as a building committee, to superintend the erection of the edifice, which was to be called "The First Methodist Episcopal Church of Rockford." This subscription list has been preserved, and is now in the archives of the society. The amount subscribed was two thousand three hundred and twelve dollars.

In August, 1846, Nathaniel P. Heath was re-assigned to this charge, at the request of the society, by Bishop Hamline, who presided over the conference at Galena. February 25, 1846, the trustees purchased of William H. Gilman, lots one, two, three, four and five, in the east half of block thirty-one, fronting on South Second street, between Oak and Walnut. The consideration was three hundred and twenty-five dollars. This part of the town was then called the "Barrens," and was a hunting-ground for the boys. These lots, except lot one, are the same upon which the Centennial church and parsonage now stand, and which were occupied by the First church and parsonage. The contract for building the First church was made with M. H. Regan, in 1846, but it was not completed

until 1848. The brick for the church was made by Hiram Richardson; the stone for the foundation was donated by Jesse Buckbee.

The conference of 1847 was held in August, at Chicago. Bishop Waugh assigned James E. Wilson to Rockford. He remained one year. The church was completed and dedicated during his pastorate. March 13, 1848, a second subscription paper was circulated. The document contained this proviso: "That the seats in said church shall be free for all, in accordance with the discipline and usages of said church,—if not free these subscriptions to be null and void." The amount pledged was two thousand and sixty-nine dollars. This document is also preserved. The dedication of the church occurred June 1, 1848. Leander S. Walker preached the dedicatory sermon. The cost of the church was about seven thousand dollars. The pulpit of this sanctuary had an unique history. Several years before, Samuel Gregory had taken careful forethought for his burial, and cut down a stately walnut tree, sawed it into boards and solemnly stored them away for his coffin. Nature seemed to resent the insinuation, and the country became so healthy as to render his efforts useless. Before Mr. Gregory had an opportunity to die, William Logue came to Rockford with an abundance of undertaking supplies, and Mr. Gregory relegated the well seasoned boards to the loft of his barn. When the First church needed a pulpit, he brought forth his treasure of walnut and literally laid it on the altar. When the Centennial church was built, the historic desk given by the first class-leader was carefully taken apart, and fashioned into the beautiful piece of furniture upon which the Bible now rests. Mr. Gregory lived more than forty years after this strange preparation for his burial; and that which was intended to encase a dead body, now holds the living word.

Canton was the seat of the conference in 1848, when Bishop Morris sent James C. Parks to Rockford. He was the first preacher who remained two years on this charge. During his first year, in 1849, the society built a "grout" parsonage on the corner lot just south of where the present parsonage stands. July 18, 1849, the annual conference was held at Rockford, with Bishop Janes presiding. Bishop Hamline presided at the conference in Plainfield, July 17, 1850. He assigned to Rockford, William P. Jones, who remained one year. He was succeeded by Francis A. Reed, who received his appointment



from Bishop Waugh, who presided over the conference, held July 17th, at Peoria. It was during the pastorate of Mr. Reed that the "Second Methodist Episcopal church" was organized. These were successful years for local Methodism. At the end of his term he reported four hundred members and twenty probationers.

From 1841 to 1853 Rockford had been a part of the Mt. Morris district. In the latter year, the conference, which met at Chicago September 14th, redistricted the work, and the Rockford district was formed. Bishop Scott sent Luke Hitchcock to the district as presiding elder. William Tasker was assigned to the First church, and "West Rockford" was left to be supplied by Mr. Chatfield.

Lewiston was the seat of the next conference, which was held September 13, 1854. James Baume was sent from this session by Bishop Morris to East Rockford. He served the church two years. Mr. Baume went to India as a missionary in 1859, and remained seven years. He was stationed at Lucknow, where his daughter, now Mrs. Henry D. Andrew, was born. Mr. Baume returned in 1866, and in that year he was assigned to the First church by Bishop Clark. Mrs. Baume died in 1867. Mr. Baume's second wife is a sister of Mrs. Thomas G. Lawler. In 1883 Mr. Baume returned to the foreign field. He first went to Naini Tal, a resort in the Himalaya mountains, and thence to Bowen church in Bombay. He returned in 1893 to Rockford, after having given seventeen years to foreign missionary fields. Mr. Baume died in June, 1897. Circuit Judge Baume, of Galena, is a son. At his death it was said of him: "He esteemed the Christian ministry the choicest, most privileged and far the highest place on earth. . . and he therefore had that calm and impressiveness which come to a man in the presence of such exalted persuasions."

From the Aurora conference, September 12, 1856, Bishop Simpson sent Hooper Crews to this charge. During his second year the society again swarmed, and the Third Street church was formed. At the conference of August, 1858, which met at Waukegan, the three societies in Rockford were respectively named First Church, Court Street and Third Street. The next conference was held at Galena, in October, 1859, when Bishop Ames reappointed Francis A. Reed to the First church. Mrs. Reed died during his first year. The Swedish Methodist Episcopal church was organized in July, 1861, during his second year.



The portraits of many of these pioneer Methodist ministers adorn the parlors of Centennial church. There is also a picture of the First Methodist church. The union of the First church and the Third Street church under the name of the Centennial church, will be considered in a later chapter.

A complete list of the early presiding elders who have served on the districts in which the Rockford appointments have been located, are as follows: 1836-40, John Clark, Chicago district; 1840-41, John T. Mitchell, Chicago district; 1841-42, S. H. Stocking, Mt. Morris district; 1842-44, John T. Mitchell, Mt. Morris district; 1844-48, Cooper Crews, Mt. Morris district; 1848-50, Philo Judson, Mt. Morris district; 1850-53, Richard Haney, Mt. Morris district; 1853-54, Luke Hitchcock, Rockford district; 1854-58, Rev. G. L. S. Stuff, Rockford district; 1858-60, Cooper Crews, Rockford district; 1860-64, Richard A. Blanchard, Rockford district; 1864-65, W. T. Harlow, Mt. Morris district; 1864-68, L. A. Sanford (six months), Rockford district; 1864-68, H. L. Martin (three years and six months), Rockford district; 1868-72, W. C. Willing, Rockford district; 1872-76, W. P. Gray, Rockford district; 1876-80, Henry L. Martin, Rockford district; 1880-84, C. E. Mandeville, Rockford district.

Of the sixty sessions of the Rock River conference, eight have been held in Rockford. The first convened with the First church, July 18, 1849. Edmund S. Janes was the presiding bishop. August 26, 1857, the conference convened in Court Street church, with Lewis Scott as presiding bishop. At the conference held with the First church, September 23, 1863, Bishop Scott again presided. October 9, 1872, the conference met in the Third Street church, with Bishop Isaac W. Wiley presiding. The next conference in Rockford met October 13, 1880, in Court Street church. Bishop Hurst presided. The charge of heresy preferred against Dr. H. W. Thomas was considered and referred to the presiding elder of his district. September 21, 1884, the conference convened with Centennial church. Bishop Henry W. Warren presided. Bishop Mallalieu presided at the conference held with Court Street church, September 27, 1887. The eighth conference convened with Centennial church, October 3, 1899, with Bishop Hurst in the chair.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### FIRST CRIME.—FIRST MARRIAGES AND BIRTHS.—CLAIM FIGHTS.

THE first crime brought to light in Winnebago county was committed in the summer of 1835. The body of a murdered man, terribly mutilated, was found in the woods, about two and a half miles south of the settlement. This discovery sent a thrill of horror to the hearts of the pioneers, who began for the first time to feel distrustful. The county had been settled by an excellent class of citizens, and this murder was the one dark shadow of these first years. The crime was at first attributed to the Indians; but this accusation was not warranted by their general treatment of the whites. The remains of the stranger were buried in the woods where he met his death. The crime remains a mystery to this day; but the poor fellow was doubtless murdered by an unsuspected Judas for his claim. The settlers allowed the tragedy to pass unrecorded in local history; and not until forty years later appeared the first published statement of the affair. This first crime was the first death of a white person in the county, so far as known. The second death was that of Sampson George, to whom reference was made in a preceding chapter.

The first marriage was that of Dr. Daniel H. Whitney and Sarah Caswell, and was solemnized by Rev. Seth S. Whitman, of Belvidere, December 10, 1836. The first marriage ceremony within the present limits of the county was that of Jeremiah Roberts and Harriet Clausen, and was performed December 11, 1836, by Sylvester Talcott, a justice of the peace. The first marriage, however, reported in the registry in the county clerk's office is that of William P. Randall and Miss Delia Driscoll, solemnized February 13, 1837, by William R. Wheeler, a justice of the peace.

Dr. Daniel Hilton Whitney, the first benedict, was a historic character. He was not the Daniel Whitney who figured prominently in the early transfers of land in sections twenty-one, twenty-two and twenty-seven, in Rockford township. Dr. Whitney settled in Belvidere in 1835, and was elected the first recorder of Winnebago county, which in 1836 included Boone

county. Dr. Whitney was tall, of commanding presence, with swarthy complexion, coal-black hair, and eagle eye, and withal the very incarnation of dynamic force. At one time Dr. Whitney was not a believer in revealed religion. Rev. Eleazer T. Ball, a Presbyterian pastor of Belvidere, when on his death-bed, sent an invitation to Dr. Whitney to come and see a Christian die. Upon his brow had come the first breath of the eternal morning, and into his soul the thrill of triumph. With Paul he could say: "O grave! where is thy victory!" Death to him was but the kiss of an angel, to waft the gentle spirit homeward to its God. What, to this, is the hero's clarion, though its blast should ring with the mastery of a world! Dr. Whitney died February 17, 1864, aged fifty-seven years. There was much in his life and character that appealed to the love of romance; and he is kindly remembered to this day. Dr. Jones, a grandson of Dr. Whitney, is practicing medicine at Belvidere.

Melissa J. Long, daughter of John B. Long, born in February, 1836, is entitled to the distinction of being the first white child born in the county. The first male child, Ogden Hance, was born in what is now Pecatonica township. George E. Dunbar, son of William E. Dunbar, was born in 1836, in a little log house situated about one block south of Kent street, on Main. Mrs. T. W. Carrico, a daughter of Benjamin Kilburn, was also among the earliest accessions by birth to the population of the village.

The protection of land claims was one of the difficulties that confronted the early settlers. Stephen A. Douglas' doctrine of squatter sovereignty was not practicable in dealing with slavery in the territories; and perhaps the renowned and doughty little giant never designed that it should be. But in Winnebago county, during the first five years after the arrival of Kent and Blake, the fact of actual possession was the only title to the soil. The land in this vicinity was not brought into market until 1839; and the Polish claims, which will be considered in a subsequent chapter, did not permit the land in two townships to be opened to sale until several years later. Claims were made upon lands, deeds were executed and money paid for lands that were still in technical legal possession of the government. In some instances several transfers were made before the original grantor obtained his patent from the government. Three facts



produced this peculiar condition in the real estate market. The "floats" which were given certain half-breed Winnebago Indians by the treaty of Prairie du Chien, were located on desirable lands by shrewd land speculators; who purchased the "floats" from their wards. These claims were given precedence. Another cause was the claim of a Polish count to Rockford and Rockton townships. The third factor was the settlement by the pioneers on lands several years before they were advertised for sale at the land office. Thus this feature of local history is quite complex. Many of the early instruments were not deeds, but simply transfers of claims, or agreements to sell the land when the titles of the grantors had been obtained. These transactions indicate the utmost confidence in the good faith of the government, and this confidence was never misplaced.

Under these circumstances, however, trouble among claimants was inevitable. There was no golden age in which the brethren always dwelt together in unity. The "transfigured menagerie," of which Dr. Boardman speaks, when the lion and the lamb should lie down together, was not fully realized on the banks of Rock river. The law allowed a settler to hold such land as he could enclose. His ambition was sometimes greater than his ability to "enclose," which was occasionally done by plowing a furrow around the claim. The first fences were of split rails or sods. The latter were quite extensively built at first, but were soon abandoned. They were made by building the sides of cut turf and filling the middle with earth. When well made, these fences were quite attractive to the eye. Their insufficiency, however, soon drew attention to hedges, and after trials of many kinds, the osage orange was extensively used. The county was not entirely free from that depraved and desperate class, who usually keep in advance of the administration of justice by the regularly established institutions of law. But these soon found that the moral atmosphere around them rendered their situation not only uncomfortable, but actually dangerous; and they were warned either to reform or emigrate.

Although difficulties frequently arose among settlers in regard to their respective titles to land, there were few of so serious a nature that they were not peaceably and satisfactorily adjusted by the claims committee. This was a sort of squatter sovereignty judiciary, which was established in almost every community. When complaint was made, a meeting was called, a chairman appointed, and a verdict rendered, which was very

generally respected. A settler who had made what was considered a favorable selection of land, or one that was likely from the growth of the county to become valuable, occasionally found in the morning that a board shanty had been put up during the night on his claim. This cabin would generally be occupied by three or four men, friends of the "jumper," who had come with him to assist in maintaining his seizure. These intruders usually had their shanties ready to put together. The work was done at some convenient sawmill where lumber could be obtained. It was then loaded on a wagon at night; and by morning they would have the house put up, and be ready to maintain their position by force of arms in what they called their "castle." The decision of the settlers' court, in the matter of "jumping claims," was usually in favor of the man who had a family, and who intended to become an actual settler; and it was always carried out to the strict letter.

An instance occurred in Rockford in the winter of 1838-39, in which the "jumper" refused to submit his pretensions to the determination of this tribunal, but persisted in completing his building upon land which had been previously recognized as belonging to another. The neighbors turned out almost *en masse*, carefully raised the building and placed it upon oxsleds, and with their teams hauled it into town. On the top of the building sat Mark Beaubien, a young man, who tied together a number of red handkerchiefs into a flaming banner, which he waved in triumph over that portion of the "land of the free." On either side of the cabin, which was now playing the role of a circuit-rider, marched the citizens in procession, one hundred or more in number. Their destination was the residence of George W. Brinckerhoff, who, it was alleged, had counseled the jumping of the claim, and who would be interested therein should it be secured. They quietly deposited their freight in Mr. Brinckerhoff's front yard, and told him they had found his property astray on the prairie; and, fearing some injury might come to it, they had deemed it their duty as good neighbors, to return it to him. They also expressed the hope that he would exercise police regulations over his wayward property. The citizens then quietly dispersed; and it is said no further trouble arose from that source.

Another case occurred at Twelve-Mile Grove, in 1844, which resulted in the death of one of the claimants. Two men started at the same time to pre-empt forty acres of land in that neigh-



borhood. One of them, named Pierce, found on reaching the place that Andrus had forestalled him, and was putting up a cabin. Pierce immediately started for Dixon on horseback. By hard riding he reached his destination the same day, made his entry at the land office, received his certificate, and immediately returned. When he arrived on the tract in dispute, he found thereon the cabin which had just been completed. His opponent had labored all night and had finished his cabin, and was now away at breakfast. Pierce quickly summoned two or three of his friends; and, on the principle that possession is nine points in the law, they entered the shanty, locked the door and awaited developments. When Andrus returned he found that he had been locked out of the cabin, and he immediately rallied to his aid a number of neighbors. Terms of capitulation were offered and refused, and hostilities began. The inmates could not be dislodged; and as a last resort the assailants tried to overturn the cabin. They had raised one side several feet, when a shot was fired from within, and they dropped their load. As the cabin recovered its perpendicular with great force, the board which covered the window fell in, and one of the attacking party fired through. Pierce sprang through the window, ran a few steps and fell dead, shot through the heart. The participants in the disturbance were apprehended for riot. One of them was tried for murder; but it could not be proved who fired the fatal shot, and all were acquitted.

The treatment of a Mr. Brown, who came to Rockford in the winter of 1837, with a large family and a very small purse, has been told by other writers. Brown built a log cabin, and moved from his wagon into his new home. He was thereupon told that his castle must be pulled down, as the claim belonged to Mr. Spaulding, who was then at St. Louis. Mr. Brown was not easily intimidated, and defended his rights. One day a crowd, under the influence of liquor, besieged his cabin. Brown confronted them with a musket. Terms of settlement were proposed. "If you will leave this claim, we agree to get you a better one, build a house, and furnish you with provisions." The ruse was successful. The terms were accepted, and the barricade removed, when the goods were ejected from the cabin, which was torn down, and the logs rolled together and burned. Brown's effects were hauled into the woods, and his family exposed to the elements on a cold, stormy night, until compassionate friends gave them shelter. Upon Mr. Spaulding's return,



he denied all pretension to the ownership of the claim. Other instances occurred in the county; but as land titles became settled, these controversies ceased.

Jonathan Weldon, who settled at Westfield, was unpopular among the early residents. John H. Thurston says it was a common story in early days that Richard Montague emigrated from New Hampshire mainly that he might beat a comfortable distance from Weldon. Mr. Montague was somewhat dismayed upon his arrival in Rockford, to find that Mr. Weldon was to be a fellow citizen. Mr. Weldon was intellectual and shrewd, though seriously deformed. In one instance he successfully opposed the entire bar of the county when it was proposed to open a road through his land. Weldon did not live at peace with his neighbors; and one night he was taken from his house by a masked party and carried to the prairie, where they made preparations, as he then believed, to hang him. However, after a consultation, they took him to the school house, and left him in the fire-place, covered with tar and feathers. Mr. Weldon, however, must not be dismissed without reference to another phase of his character; and this has been presented by one who knew him well. In a letter to the late Hon. E. H. Baker, from Eureka, California, under date of November 24, 1886, C. A. Huntington, formerly of Rockford, writes: "Without exception he was the most remarkable man I ever knew. A man who never walked a step in his life, yet traveled more miles than any farmer of his time. He settled without a dollar in the grove near Rock river, and took up a large farm well chosen with both prairie and timber. His children, when young, two sons and two daughters (whose mother was also a cripple and never walked a step in her life), while yet in their childhood so plied their young hands to work, that in a few years under the prudent management of parents, both of whom had judgment and tact, that they had fields fenced and plowed, they had a good stock of horses, mules, swine, cattle, poultry, and money in abundance. Mr. Weldon was a man of education, and in spite of all the impediments of frontier life and all the disadvantages under which he labored, a cripple himself with a decrepid wife, he educated his children, all of whom took rank among the best settlers of the county, and one, his oldest son, became a clergyman."

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE COUNTY DIVIDED.—“MILE-STRIP CONTEST.”—MINOR NOTES.

An act of the legislature, approved March 4, 1837, provided for the reorganization of Winnebago county, and the creation of Stephenson and Boone. The latter was named in honor of Colonel Daniel Boone, the first white settler of Kentucky. By this act Winnebago county was reduced to one-half its original size. The reader will find it necessary, in tracing the boundary lines, to have before him maps of Winnebago and Boone counties; also some acquaintance with the township survey system. Confusion will arise if it is not remembered that the townships in Winnebago county, west of the third principal meridian, are numbered from a different base-line from those east of this meridian. It must also be borne in mind that the ranges west of the third principal meridian are numbered, not as ranges *west* of the *third* principal meridian, but as *east* of the *fourth* principal meridian.

The first section of this law creates Stephenson county from the eastern portion of Jo Daviess and the western two ranges of Winnebago, as the latter had been organized the preceding year. The next section defines the new boundary of Winnebago. The line begins at the northeast corner of Stephenson, as formed by the preceding section; thence running east on the state line to the section line between sections five and six, in township forty-six north, range three east of the third principal meridian; thence south on said section line to the south boundary of township forty-three north, range three east; thence west on said township line to the third principal meridian; thence north on said meridian to the southeast corner of township twenty-six north, range eleven east of the fourth principal meridian; thence west on said line to the range line between ranges nine and ten east of the fourth principal meridian; thence north to the place of beginning.

The third section of this law contemplated the boundaries of Boone as they now exist, except the mile-strip on the west. This law was seriously defective in defining the boundary lines. The intention of the legislature, however, was obvious, and was

accepted until two years later, when the act of March 2, 1839, corrected the errors, which may have been either verbal or typographical. This act also proposed to extend Boone county on the east to include the western range of townships in McHenry county, provided the voters in those townships should so elect. As Boone never extended farther east than at present, it may be inferred that the settlers residing on the range in question voted against annexation to Boone. The writer was once told by the late Judge Lawrence, of Boone county, that about 1846 this question was again submitted to the voters of these western McHenry townships, and that an election was carried in favor of annexation to Boone, but that this expression of the popular will was defeated by a dishonest postmaster, who changed the election returns while they were in his office to suit his purpose.

By comparing the boundary lines of Winnebago and Boone, as defined by the act of 1837, with an atlas of the counties, it will be observed that the eastern boundary of Winnebago was exactly one mile east of its present line. Thus established, Boone was only eleven miles wide. The western tier of sections, which clearly belonged to Boone under the government survey, was denied her and given to Winnebago.

This manifest injustice to Boone county was a thorn in the flesh of her citizens, and finally precipitated what is known as the "mile-strip contest," the most bitter controversy of those early days. The statement is twice made in Kett's History of Boone county that the assignment of this mile-strip to Winnebago in 1837 was a compromise to conciliate conflicting interests in this county. These "conflicting interests" were probably the ambitions of East and West Rockford for the county buildings. The extra mile-strip may have been given to Winnebago, at the instance of clever manipulators, to increase the voting strength of that part of the county east of Rock river.

In 1843 the question of annexing this mile-strip to Boone county came before the legislature. An enabling act, approved February 28th, provided that sections six, seven, eighteen, nineteen, thirty and thirty-one, in townships forty-three, forty-four, forty-five and forty-six, range three east, should be annexed to Boone, if the voters on the mile-strip should so elect. The strip comprised what is now the western tier of sections in the townships of Manchester, Caledonia, Belvidere and Flora, in Boone county. An election was ordered to be held at the house of



Samuel Keith, in the village of Newburg, Winnebago county, May 4, 1843. The citizens of Rockford were deeply interested in the result, although the county seat had recently been re-located on the West side, and the voters the preceding year had expressed a preference for that side. They were not, of course, allowed to vote. Only those on the mile-strip had a voice in the matter. The election called out ninety-five votes. Fifty-one were for annexation to Boone, and forty-four against it; a majority of seven in favor of Boone. This election added twenty-four sections of valuable land to our eastern neighbor, and thus greatly increased her taxable property. Had this election been held several years earlier, the result might have been a factor in determining the location of the county buildings. But under the circumstances, it had no such influence. Additional facts upon this point are given in a later chapter devoted to the prolonged controversy over the county seat.

In 1845 the legislature passed an act which provided as follows: "That it shall be lawful for the county commissioners' court of the county of Boone, by an order to be entered upon the records of said court, to require the recorder of the county of Winnebago, and the clerk of the commissioners' court of said county, to transcribe into a book, to be provided for that purpose by the county commissioners' court of the said county of Boone, all records of said offices relating to the following described territory of land, to-wit: Sections six, seven, eighteen, nineteen, thirty and thirty-one, in each of the townships of forty-three, forty-four, forty-five and forty-six, in range three east of the third principal meridian."

This act referred to the mile-strip; and its provisions were faithfully executed. The county commissioners of Boone provided the necessary books, and required the clerk and recorder of Winnebago county to transcribe therein all records and orders relating to the strip. When completed, this transcript was regularly certified and forwarded to the proper official in Boone, and placed among the recorded proceedings of its court. This transaction completed the record of the transfer for that county.

The first tax levy was ordered by the county commissioners' court, at its March term, 1837. One-half per cent. tax was levied on town lots, horses and mares, neat cattle above three years old, watches, carriages, and wagons, and a tax of one-fourth per

cent. on stock in trade. Through some technicality, this levy was declared illegal, and a second levy was made. At that time farm lands were not taxable. They were not placed upon the market at the land offices until two years later, and for three years thereafter they were exempt from taxation. It was not until 1842-43 that any county revenue was obtained from this source. The revenue required to meet the expense of the county until the lands became taxable was derived from assessments against personal property. Under this order the total amount levied was five hundred and sixty-two dollars and fifty-nine and one-half cents. Of this sum, two hundred and ninety-eight dollars and twenty-nine and one-half cents were assessed upon personal property; and two hundred and sixty-four dollars and thirty cents on lots in the town of Winnebago, owned by non-residents. At that time the assessment was made by the county treasurer, and the taxes were collected by the sheriff. R. J. Cross, the treasurer, consumed fifteen days in making this assessment. His compensation was thirty dollars, or two dollars per day. He was also allowed nine dollars and twenty-eight cents, for receiving and disbursing the taxes when collected. This commission was two per cent. on four hundred and sixty-four dollars, the amount actually collected.

The revenue law of February, 1839, changed the manner of assessing and collecting taxes. The county commissioners' courts were authorized to appoint one or more assessors, not exceeding one for each justice's district; also a suitable person for collector. The Whig county convention of 1840 made nominations for county assessor and collector; but they must have been only as timely suggestions to the commissioners' court. An act of February, 1841, restricted the commissioners' courts to the appointment of one assessor for the county. From 1838 to 1844, Goodyear A. Sanford collected all the taxes of the county, which aggregated from two hundred and thirty-seven to six hundred and forty dollars per annum during those years. These collections were made in part by virtue of his office of deputy sheriff, and the balance by special appointment. This system was superseded a few years later by the township organization law.

This chapter may properly close with a reference to the day of small things. The first frame building in Rockford was erected in 1836, by Sidney Twogood and Thomas Lake. It was a



story-and-a-half structure, and stood on the southwest corner of State and Madison streets, and faced east. It was first occupied as a general store by Harry W. Bundy and George Goodhue. The latter was a nephew of Dr. Goodhue. This firm continued in business there only about two years, and then removed to Beloit in the spring of 1838. Many years later this building was removed to the lot adjoining the railroad track on the same side of the street, where it remained until a few years ago, when a stone building was erected on the site. The second frame structure was built for Daniel S. Haight, on the northeast corner of State and Madison streets, and to which reference has already been made. While this building was in progress, however, Mr. Haight employed a force of carpenters in constructing a small frame dwelling house on lot nine of the same block. He lived in this as soon as it was enclosed. This was the first frame house in Rockford occupied by a family. Mr. Haight had vacated his first log house for the Miller family. James B. Martyn, who came from Alabama upon Mr. Haight's solicitation, claimed to have built the first frame house in the county, in 1836, on his claim on the State road, one mile east of the intersection of State and Third streets. Mr. Martyn died at Belvidere in 1881.

The first theatrical performance was given October 29, 1838, in the old Rockford House. The manager of the company was the elder Jefferson, father of the world-renowned Joseph Jefferson. "Joe" was but a youth, and acted in "Lord Lovell," then a new play. The company was weather-bound in Rockford while enroute from Chicago to Galena. The river was not passable by reason of heavy moving ice. The last time the famous impersonator of "Rip Van Winkle" was in Rockford he related this incident to a local reporter.

The first tailor in Rockford was William H. Tinker, who came from Massachusetts. He was in the village in 1836, but he did not consider the outlook very promising, and he left the field. In June, 1837, Parson King Johnson, from Brandon, Vermont, came to Rockford, and found Mr. Tinker's cutting board in the rear room of Bundy & Goodhue's store. Mr. Tinker returned to Rockford, and the firm of Tinker & Johnson became the first in that line in the village. The firm occupied the upper room in a building on the site of 111 South Madison street. Mr. Tinker is now living with a son at St. Paul, and is about eighty-six years of age. He visited Rockford last year. Mr.



Tinker is an uncle of Hon. Robert H. Tinker, and married Miss Elizabeth Barnum, an aunt of Mrs. Harriott Wight Sherratt.

The first shoemaker was Ezra Barnum. He was father of Anson Barnum and Mrs. James M. Wight, and grandfather of Mrs. Sherratt. Mr. Barnum came from Danbury, Connecticut, in the summer of 1837. A history of Danbury shows the Barnums to have been an old family of that city. One of the eight founders of the city, with this name, died in 1695. Mrs. M. T. Trowbridge is descended from a branch of this family. The history was written in part by J. M. Bailey, the well known humorist of the *Danbury News*.

The first brick was made in the autumn of 1837 by Cyrus C. Jenks, in Guilford, about three and a half miles northeast of the town. The larger portion of this brick was used for chimneys. The first brick house was a small, square structure, one story, on the southeast corner of block eighteen, on First street, opposite the public square. It was built in 1838, by John H. Morse. The first carpenter cannot be determined with accuracy; but it is probable that Thomas Lake and Sidney Twogood were the first skilled workmen. The first saloon was opened in 1837, by Samuel Little, an Englishman. He put up a small one-story building near 316 East State street. The first blacksmith was probably one of the men employed by Mr. Kent. The second was William Penfield. His frame building was on the northeast corner of Madison and Market streets. William P. Dennis was the first house-painter, and in 1837 he displayed his skill on Mr. Haight's first frame house. The first drug-store was opened early in the summer of 1838, by "Dr." Marshal, a Scotchman. It was on the north side of State street, about eighty feet from the river. He was once called to prescribe for Dr. Haskell, who refused to take his medicine. It proved to be seventy grains of calomel. The first bakers were Ephraim Wyman and Bethuel Houghton, who did business in 1838 as partners on South Main street. The first store was kept by John Vance, in a log cabin on South First street, opposite the hay market. He subsequently started a provision store at Winnebago, when that village seemed likely to become the county seat.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### NEW ENGLAND CONGREGATIONALISM.—THE FIRST CHURCH.

NEW England Congregationalism came with the early settlers. This institution was firmly established within three years after the arrival of Mr. Kent and Mr. Blake, and it has maintained a strong and influential position in Rockford until the present time. The First Congregational church was organized May 5, 1837, with nine members: Rev. John Morrill, Herman B. Potter, Israel Morrill, Richard Morrill, Elizabeth P. Morrill, Mary J. Morrill, Sophia N. Morrill, Minerva Potter, and Eunice Brown. The only survivor of this membership is Richard Morrill, who is now living with his son in Minnesota. Mr. Morrill is ninety-four years of age. He is an uncle of Mrs. A. M. Catlin, of Rockford. The church was founded by Rev. John Morrill, at the home of his brother, Israel Morrill, on the west side of the river. It is therefore the oldest church in Rockford, inasmuch as the First Methodist church, formed the previous year, ceased to exist. The three Morrill brothers and their wives constituted just two-thirds of the original membership. Two weeks later, May 19th, there were five accessions: Edward Cating, Charles Works, Asa Crosby, Mary Crosby, and Mary Danforth. Miss Danforth was a sister of Mrs. Israel Morrill. Their sister Sarah was the wife of D. A. Spaulding, the surveyor. Mrs. Spaulding died at Alton, Illinois, August 22, 1887. She was seventy-six years of age. During the year the following were also received into membership: Mary Works, wife of Charles Works, Deborah Barnum, wife of Ezra Barnum, Eleazer H. Potter, Adeline Potter, Samuel D. Preston, and Mary Preston. The last named member is Mrs. Selden M. Church, who is the only survivor among the women of that first year's congregation. During its first year the church had attained a membership of twenty souls. Israel Morrill and H. B. Potter were the first deacons.

The first confession of faith and form of covenant, adopted temporarily at its organization, was that recommended by the Watertown presbytery. One year later, May 4, 1838, this was displaced by the articles of faith and covenant of the Rock

River Congregational Association. At the first meeting it was unanimously voted that "all persons, before uniting with the church, should sign a pledge of total abstinence from all intoxicating drinks as a beverage." Under date of August 11, 1837, there is found the following entry: "The resolution touching the slavery question being agitated, it was resolved that for the present the subject be postponed, to receive the attention and action of the church at some future time." No other record upon this subject, however, has been found.

Rev. John Morrill was the first pastor. Very little is known of him previous to his removal to the west. He had come in a farm wagon from New York as a home missionary to this county, where his brother had previously settled. Mr. Morrill served as pastor one year from May, 1837. He officiated at the organization of the Presbyterian church in Belvidere, March 17, 1839, and was its stated supply until March of the following year. The late Mrs. Eunice Brown Lyon is authority for the statement that Mr. Morrill received no formal call to the pastorate of the Congregational church. He was the leading spirit in its organization, and he may have assumed the work with the understanding, explicit or implied, that he should serve as its pastor for a time. Mrs. Brown also says that the brethren were somewhat slack in paying the pastor's salary. This delinquency, however, was redeemed by the ladies, who secured pledges for a goodly sum. Mr. Morrill was a devout man, who labored for the spiritual growth of the people. He placed emphasis upon pecuniary reward only so far as it was necessary for his support. This pioneer minister died at Pocatonia February 16, 1874.

Soon after its organization the church held services in the "stage barn," built by Daniel S. Haight, near the intersection of State and Third streets. Only a few years ago this structure was standing on the farm of Isaac Rowley, near the city. In the summer of 1838 the trustees began the erection of a frame structure on the west side of North First street, on a site near the residence of Irving French. When the building had been enclosed and shingled it was learned that Messrs. Kent and Brinckerhoff had obtained about eight hundred dollars from friends in New York, for a church. Instead of turning over this money to the society to complete the church, these gentlemen built an edifice on their own side of the river. This building was raised in the summer of 1838, and enclosed the same sea-

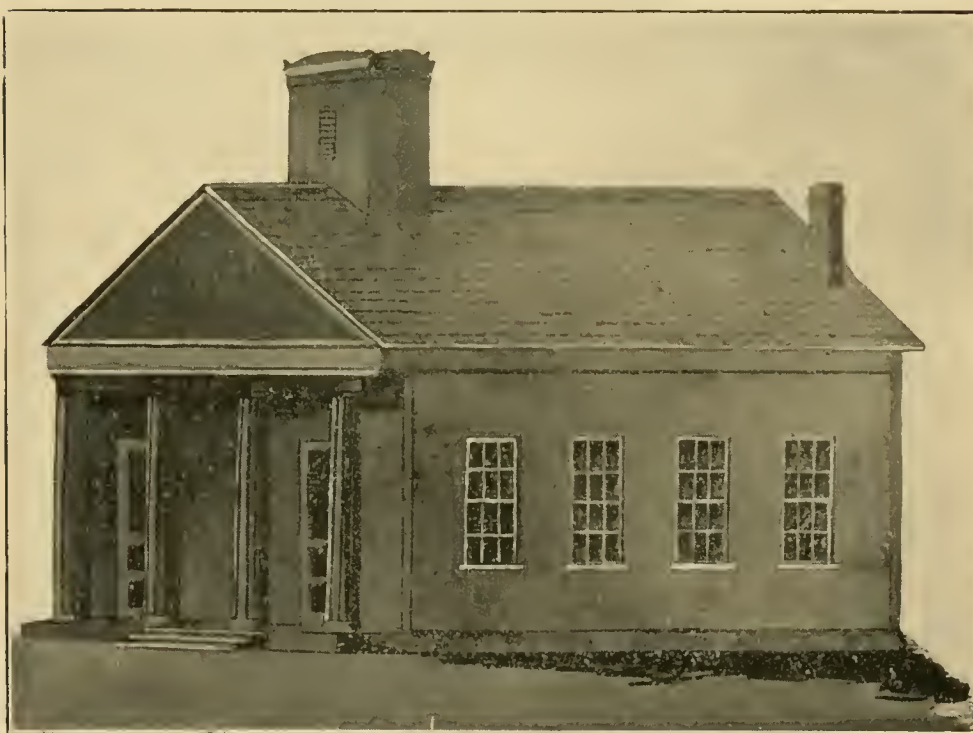






### **FIRST METHODIST CHURCH**

Built in 1846 on the site of the Centennial Church



### **FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**

Built in 1838 by Germanicus Kent and George W. Brinckerhoff, on the southwest corner of Church and Green streets. The building was used as a place of worship by the Second Congregational church from 1849 to 1858.

son. When it was completed they turned it over to the society for worship, but retained their nominal title. At that time they possessed no legal title to the land from the government. Those eastern friends knew but little of the power for good of this beautiful little church, in laying the foundations of a prosperous Christian community. The unfinished building on North First street was abandoned, and was never afterward used by this church as a house of worship. It was, however, devoted to other purposes, which will be noted in subsequent chapters.

The building erected by Kent and Brinckerhoff was the first church edifice in Rockford: It stood on the southwest corner of Church and Green streets. It was a frame structure, clapboarded, in Doric style, forty-five feet square inside, and stood on a foundation of blocks of trees cut in the adjoining grove, with sills resting upon them about three feet above the ground. In fact, the greater portion of the building material was obtained from adjacent lots. The building fronted to the east, and had three windows on each side. A porch about ten feet wide extended across the front, covered by an extension of the roof, which was supported by four fluted wooden columns. On the east end of the roof stood a cupola, or belfry, about eight feet square, ten feet high, and covered by a hip roof. This cupola had a bell, whose tones seemed sweeter to the worshipers on a quiet Sabbath morning than any other which they have heard in Rockford since that time. This bell was taken away by the owner, Rev. Cyrus L. Watson, upon the close of his pastorate. The building was plastered, and painted white inside. Two doors led to the sanctuary from the front; two aisles extended from these, which made four rows of pews. The pulpit at the west end was large, high, and enclosed by panel work, and withal was capable of withstanding a siege. The singers' gallery was formed by raised pews at the eastern end of the auditorium. This structure was plain, but neat and substantial, and its pure white exterior, with a background of oak trees in the surrounding forest, made it beautiful for situation, and the joy of its friends. This sylvan sanctuary was occupied by the First church about six years.

The Ladies' Foreign Missionary Society was organized in 1838, just one year after the founding of the church. The originators of this movement, like the founders of the church, were largely from New England, who had been interested in foreign missions and education in their eastern homes, and who had



not left their zeal behind them, although they might properly have considered themselves on home missionary ground. The object of the society is briefly stated in its preamble: "In view of the deplorable condition of millions in this and foreign lands, who are destitute of the word of life, and esteeming it a duty and privilege to aid by prayer, contribution and influence the great work of evangelizing the world, we, the ladies of Rockford, feeling that united influence is far the most powerful, agree to form ourselves into a society for the promotion of this object." The first year there were thirty-six contributors. In May, 1838, the society made its first appropriation to a girls' school in Dindigul, in southern India. All sectarian feeling was merged in a common desire to fulfill the great commission. Episcopalians, Baptists and Unitarians were among its early members. As near as can be ascertained, a Sunday-school was organized in the spring of 1839.

The second pastor was Rev. Cyrus L. Watson, who served the church from November, 1838, to May, 1841. He was a genial, social, elderly gentleman, a good pastor, and he was highly esteemed. His death occurred at Battle Creek, Michigan. Rev. William S. Curtis, D. D., supplied the pulpit from November, 1841, to August, 1842. Dr. Curtis subsequently became pastor of the Westminster Presbyterian church. His death occurred in 1885, and his funeral was held June 1st, from the Westminster church. Dr. Curtis' son, Edward L. Curtis, is a professor in the Yale divinity school. Prof. Curtis married a sister of Rev. B. E. S. Ely, pastor of the First Presbyterian church. The senior Curtis was succeeded by Rev. Oliver W. Norton, who was pastor from September, 1842, until some time in the following year. He possessed that argumentative type of mind which was common among the clergymen of the old school. Rev. Lansing Porter served a brief pastorate from February, 1844, to April, 1846.

In the spring of 1846 the church dedicated a new house of worship on the East side. It was a brick structure, and stood on the northeast corner of South First and Walnut streets, on the site of the engine house. Its dimensions were forty by sixty feet; the walls were twenty feet high. A projection at the rear formed a recess for the pulpit. The roof was one-quarter pitch, with a square tower on the center of the front, rising about twenty feet. From this tower a bell called the people to their public devotions. The bell belonged to Rev. Norton, and he

took it with him when he went away. W. A. Dickerman, as agent for the church, subsequently purchased a Meneely bell in New York, weighing six hundred and forty pounds. When it was brought to town by team it was first delivered in a warehouse. So anxious were the people to hear a bell in Rockford, that a platform was extemporized, so that it rang out loud and clear, and attracted all the parishioners, before it was taken to the church.

No picture of this church is known to have been preserved. The exterior was finished nearly in the Tuscan style of architecture, and it presented a very attractive appearance. A vestibule extended across the interior front, with a choir gallery overhead. In this vestibule were held the prayer-meetings of the church. Two aisles extended from the vestibule to the pulpit at the rear of the church. The pews were shut in by doors in the old-fashioned way. This building had a seating capacity of about three hundred and fifty, and cost not far from eight thousand dollars. Galleries were subsequently built, with a seating capacity of one hundred and fifty. This church continued to be the house of worship for this congregation until 1870.

The construction of a new house of worship is frequently, and perhaps generally, followed by a change in the pastorate. Such was the experience of this society soon after the dedication of its new church. The resignation of Rev. Lansing Porter was followed by a call to the Rev. Lewis H. Loss, whose pastorate began in August, 1846.

Many recollections of those early days are recalled by citizens who are still residents of the city. "Everybody went to church in those days," said H. H. Waldo on one occasion, while in a reminiscent mood. "I sang with the ladies, the Misses Silsby and others, in the First Congregational church, when it was where the East side fire station is now. I could write a book of the pranks and jokes of the members of that choir and my early friends. I remember one Sunday Jason Marsh came to church wearing the first pair of prunella shoes that we had ever seen. He stuck them up conspicuously on the railing. I came in from the country with my boots all covered with mud, and espying those prunella shoes, put mine up beside them. He took his down, and was never known again to sit with his feet on the choir rail.

"Catlin Spafford," continued Mr. Waldo, "used to be door-keeper at the First church, and while the minister was praying,



would allow no one to take a seat. I reached church one cold day just as Dr. Loss had started prayer, and it was no fun standing outside. 'Cat.,' says I, 'how much longer will he be?' He pulled out his watch. 'Fifteen minutes; he's just praying for the Mexican war,' Mr. Spafford answered." In reply to the question as to whether he remembered any of the girls of those days, Mr. Waldo said: "Well, I should say so. There were a lot of them, but they are all dead and gone to heaven now. There were Mrs. Knowlton, Mrs. Hitchcock, Mrs. George W. Barnes, Mrs. General Chetlain, who was Miss Edwards, and others."

Upon the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the church, Dr. Goodwin prepared a memorial address, which abounded in those felicitous character sketches for which he was noted. A few of those personal allusions to the members of the church and congregation who worshiped in the old brick church are quoted herewith. E. H. Potter was indeed a pillar both of the church and the community, a granite column whose firmness and solidity of character no force of circumstances or opinions of others could shake. His place in the sanctuary was as fixed and constant as that of the seasons, and his support of the gospel and all Christian charity was relied on with a confidence like that we repose in the laws of nature. Joel Potter, his brother, was also a pillar, but of a somewhat different type. He was of a more gentle and flexible mould, more delicate in feeling and sensibility, less self-poised and resolute, at least in manner, though not wanting in strength of conviction and of character. He was a leader in the spiritual concerns of the church, as the other was in its material affairs. His wise spiritual exhortations came from a soul that knew how to commune with God and had learned the ways of the Spirit. Deacon Skinner was undemonstrative, humble-minded, plain and even rustic in his nature and habit, but disclosing, like certain rough minerals, a hidden ore of gold to those who examined it. Deacon Crosby was one of those silent, modest, thoughtful and steadfast souls whose power lies in their character, rather than in what they say and do. Deacon Baker was familiarly known and revered as "Good Deacon Baker." Dr. Goodwin's memory of him was like that of a long, mellow, sunshiny afternoon in autumn, when the sun seems to shine lovingly and lingeringly on all things, and to impart a golden luster to everything on which it shines. Bela Shaw was a man whom to know at all was to esteem. His



urbanity of manner, the combined integrity and gentleness of his bearing, his uniform kindness and courtesy, and the soul of honor and integrity that shone through it all, and gave to his character a diamond luster—these traits marked him as the true gentleman. Volney A. Marsh was a devoted member, and superintendent of the sabbath-school. William H. Townsend proved his faith by his works. He was modest and sensitive as a woman, retiring and almost shy in his disposition, and shrank from all display or publicity. He was the very soul of honor and integrity. He felt the slightest breath of suspicion as a deadly miasma that infected the seat of life and struck at the vitals of his character. David S. Penfield, a member of the society, was highly esteemed for his Christian character. He was one of the pillars upon which the church and society leaned for support. Samuel I. Church was one of its earliest and most constant supporters. William T. Wallis was distinguished for his generous social qualities, refined courtesy and gentleness of spirit. He was a true Christian gentleman and helper.

The pipe organ used in the church was built by H. H. Silsby and his brother. The organist at one time was Rufus Hatch, who subsequently removed to New York, and became one of the most famous operators of Wall street. During his residence in Rockford he was engaged in the dry goods business, on East State street, near the site of Mr. Coyner's drug store. His home was on South Madison street, where Miss Kate O'Connor's residence now stands. Mr. Hatch removed from Rockford about 1856. His house was purchased by Dr. Hale, who lived in it until he built another on the corner, where Mrs. Hale now resides. When Mr. Hatch became wealthy, he presented the pipe organ which is now in use in the present house of worship, to Dr. and Mrs. Goodwin. The Doctor was pastor when this church was dedicated. This splendid gift, which cost about four thousand dollars, was Mr. Hatch's personal token of esteem for Dr. Goodwin. Some time later Dr. Goodwin preached a sermon on Music, in which he referred to its high place in Christian worship. At the close of this discourse Dr. Goodwin said that he and Mrs. Goodwin relinquished all claim to the organ. "It is henceforth neither mine nor yours, but the Lord's, to whom I now dedicate it."

Mrs. E. P. Catlin recalls the time when the young people were not so prominent in the devotional meetings as in these later years. Upon this point Mrs. Catlin writes this interesting

reminiscence: "The social life of the church was of a very sedate and discreet quality in those days. The prayer-meeting could hardly be called a social function. I heard one of sainted memory liken it to a pole under a sagging clothes-line. It always braced her up at the right point. We young people rarely invaded its sacred precincts, and I recall how we admired the courage of the sisters who dared to say a few words in these meetings. I am sure we could detect a little apprehensive quiver in their voices, lest they receive merited rebuke, but the sweet words of counsel or admonition uttered by Mrs. Mary Potter, Mrs. Mary Penfield and Mrs. Sarah Catlin are among those beautiful early memories. The singing by the church choir was truly a part of the worship, and not a musical entertainment merely. Prominent and dignified members of the church were willing to assist in the singing. We can recall the clear soprano of Miss Sill, principal of the seminary, and the deep bass of 'Squire Marsh, whose position as one of the first lawyers did not prevent his giving his services gladly. The little wheezy melodeon contributed its quota when the day of the tuning-fork had passed. In all this the children and very young people had no place. . . . In comparing this social life with the present, nothing is more marked than the absence of young people in the church membership, as well as in its relations. . . . While some of our church entertainments bring and deserve criticism, the younger element is certainly more in evidence now, and adds very materially to our efficiency and enjoyment."

Dr. Loss' pastorate continued until November, 1849. He was a man of ability and thorough education. He went from Rockford to Joliet, where he had charge of a church until 1856. His last pastorate was at Marshalltown, Iowa, where he died. In his last illness he longed to see his old friend and physician, Dr. Lucius Clark, of this city; and his church sent for the Doctor and paid his traveling expenses.

Dr. Loss was succeeded by the Rev. Henry M. Goodwin, D. D., who perhaps gave to the church its most distinctive pastorate. It extended from August, 1850, to January, 1872. This period of more than twenty-one years constitutes fully one-third of its entire history. The interim between the departure of Dr. Loss and Dr. Goodwin's acceptance of a call was supplied by Prof. Joseph Emerson, of Beloit college. Dr. Goodwin was a native of Hartford, Connecticut. He was graduated from Yale, and the Rockford church was his first parish. A



long and close acquaintance with Dr. Goodwin was necessary in order to form a correct estimate of his character. With the reserved quiet of the scholar, he "opened not his heart to each passer-by." His people enjoyed his sermons, and carried thoughts from them through the busy week; thoughts that inspired to high endeavor, and stirred a feeling of reverence toward the pastor. The intellectual quality and literary finish of his sermons did not always insure general appreciation. He did not aspire to be a "popular preacher," in the modern use of the term. Some of his admirers would have been surprised if they had been told that Dr. Goodwin possessed a keen sense of humor, and that he could tell a bright story in a charming way. He was criticised for not always recognizing acquaintances on the street; yet this same abstracted scholar knew the little ones of the flock by name; and no one could be more tender in his ministrations when sickness and sorrow came into the home.

Dr. Goodwin was a progressive thinker; and in certain lines he was far in advance of his time. On one occasion he remarked that the name of one of the church papers, the *Advance*, should be changed to the *Retreat*. Had the term "higher criticism" been in vogue in his day, he would have been classed with such critics. His broad Christian charity caused some anxiety among his more conservative friends. This fact was illustrated during revival services about 1860, when Dr. Goodwin invited a Unitarian minister, with others, to join in the meetings. The censure thus incurred was not measured or unspoken. One zealous man gave utterance to his amazement and indignation at the service in question. He was allowed free and full expression of his feelings without protest. After he had finished, Dr. Goodwin arose, and in gentle, dignified tones, repeated Leigh Hunt's famous poem, "Abou Ben Adhem"—may his tribe increase. Ben Adhem truly loved his fellow men, and so the angel, who came to him by night, recorded his name among the first of those whom the love of God had blest. The moral was obvious; and the silence that followed this recital was of that quality that could be *felt*. No finer illustration of Dr. Goodwin's all-embracing and forgiving charity could have been given.

Dr. Goodwin was an enthusiastic disciple of Dr. Horace Bushnell. In his work, *The Vicarious Sacrifice*, Dr. Bushnell formulates in a clear and forcible manner the moral influence theory of Christ's atonement. Dr. Bushnell and Dr. Goodwin believed that the substitutionary and the governmental views



were inconsistent with an enlightened conception of God. For this position they were not infrequently charged with heresy. Dr. Bushnell's later book, *Forgiveness and Law*, is believed to contain some modification of his former radical views. But Dr. Goodwin reverently and earnestly preached this doctrine of the divine sacrifice during his entire pastorate; and since his day it has been taught by many progressive thinkers in the Congregational church; and during the last ten years it has gained rapidly in other evangelical bodies. Dr. Goodwin testified to his regard for his illustrious teacher by naming his son Horace Bushnell Goodwin.

Dr. Goodwin's pleasant home while in Rockford was on Kishwaukee street. His lots extended from the corner on First avenue to Col. Lawler's home. The house, which stood near what is now 206 Kishwaukee street, now stands in the rear of the Carpenter Block, and fronts on First avenue. Mrs. Goodwin was an aunt of Mrs. Clara G. Sanford and Miss Blanche Goodall. Before her marriage she was a teacher at the seminary.

Many of the young men and women of that period, whose faces are now turned toward life's setting sun, are sure that of Dr. Goodwin it could be said: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

Soon after leaving Rockford, Dr. Goodwin wrote a book entitled *Christ and Humanity*, which was published by the Harpers. It was dedicated to his friend in these noble words: "To Horace Bushnell, my revered friend and teacher, whose profound and sanctified genius has made the world his debtor, and whose eminent services to Christianity in the reconciliation of faith and reason await the verdict of the future ages, these later studies of Christian doctrine are filially and affectionately inscribed by the author." This work was written while the author was enjoying an extended sojourn in Germany. In 1875 Dr. Goodwin was called to the chair of English literature by the college at Olivet, Michigan, which he filled for several years. His death occurred at the home of his daughter, Mrs. Weld, in Williamstown, Massachusetts, March 1, 1893. Dr. Goodwin was seventy-one years of age. His remains were brought to Rockford for burial.

## CHAPTER XIX.

FIRST PATRIOTIC CELEBRATION.—THE POSTOFFICE.—FIRST COURTS.

THE patriotism of the little village did not differ essentially from the prevailing type. It necessarily found its expression in more primitive ways than it does at the present time. There was such a display of eloquence and gunpowder as the times afforded; and the amusements differed somewhat from those of today.

The morning of July 4, 1837, was welcomed with the boom of all available artillery. William Penfield's blacksmith's anvil did heroic service. The "boys" spent a long time in drilling a hole for priming. One held a drill down with a lever, while another drilled. (The subsequent owner of the anvil would not allow the patriots to use it in later years for salutes; but they took it, nevertheless, and made it ring.) A hickory liberty-pole was raised near what is now 310 East State street. Patriotic exercises were held in Mr. Haight's barn, which stood in the grove near the intersection of State and Third streets. The bay was floored for the speakers, and the threshing-floor was occupied by the ladies. Charles I. Horsman read the Declaration of Independence, and Hon. John C. Kemble was the orator of the day. Dinner was served in the old Rockford House, by the proprietor, Henry Thurston. The main part of the building had been covered with a roof, and was sided to the first-story windows. Loose boards were laid for a floor, tables were arranged, and, in the absence of crockery, the cold meat was served on shingles. The tickets for this dinner were sold at one dollar each, and this feature of the celebration was a financial success. J. Ambrose Wight, in a letter written many years later, referred to the celebration in this wise: "The seventeen-year locusts were on hand and gave us such music as they had; sufficient at least in quantity. And in seventeen years again they were on hand in the same vicinity; that is, their successors were. After the celebration there was a dinner with toasts given

and liquors swallowed. But a temperance society was organized in the barn during the afternoon. The elder Mr. Potter, Eleazer or Herman, I forget which—but who lived near by in the grove, was the leader in the movement.”

The celebration was concluded with a public ball, the first in the county, given in Mr. Haight’s barn. John H. Thurston, in referring to this event, says: “Some shirting was tacked to the studding about one room for a ladies’ dressing-room.” The orchestra consisted of three pieces. In this day they would be called violins; but sixty-three years ago they were simply common fiddles. The leader, Mr. Thurston says, was “old Jake Miller, whose only dancing tune was ‘Zip Coon.’” Thus passed the first celebration of the national holiday in Rockford.

This observance of the day, however, was not the first in the county. July 4, 1836, when Belvidere was in Winnebago county, the citizens of that village let loose their patriotism in quite unconventional fashion. Dr. Daniel H. Whitney has given this vivid pen-picture of the day: “Young Morn shook from her purple wings as glorious a Fourth as ever kissed Aurora’s cheek when she unbarred the gates of light, and no more patriotic and grateful hearts beat in American bosoms on that glorious day than did those of the citizens of Boone, as with all available material at our command, an old rifle, a tolerable shot-gun and a pocket pistol, the old settlers took their position on the mound, raised a liberty-pole, from which fluttered in the breeze a pocket handkerchief having the portraits of the presidents around its border, and being the nearest approach to a national flag of anything in these ‘diggings.’ We read the Declaration of Independence, fired a national salute, gave three times three that frightened the Indian from his wigwam, and the red deer from his covert.”

The first postmaster was Daniel S. Haight, who served from August 31, 1837, to June 26, 1840. The first mail arrived about September 15th. Previous to this time the small packages of mail had been brought from Chicago by parties who made trips to that city for supplies. An order for mail upon the postmaster at that office, to which each man attached his name, was left at Mr. Haight’s house. The first mail was brought on horseback, the second by a carrier, and the third by open wagon with two horses. After the postoffice had been established, the contract for carrying the mail was made with



John D. Winters. About this time Winters became associated with Frink, Walker & Co. Still later Winters was on the line west from Rockford, and finally Frink, Walker & Co. carried the mail on the through line. Previous to January, 1838, the mail arrived from Chicago once a week. In 1839-40 the mails arrived from the west and east each three times a week. The northern and the southern mails came once a week; the mail from Mineral Point arrived on Saturday, and the mail from Coltonville came on Wednesday.

The first mail, in September, arrived with no key, and it was returned unopened. When the second mail arrived a key had been provided, but the postmaster was not equal to the combination, and he turned it over to Giles C. Hard, who solved the problem. Its contents, about a hatful, were received with a general handshaking. The postage was twenty-five cents for each letter, and stamps were unknown. That amount of money then represented the highest respectability; the mail-bags were therefore lean, while the letters were plump. These missives were read and re-read until they were almost committed to memory. They came from loved ones far away, and were regarded with a degree of sanctity. Letters from the east were from fifteen to thirty days in transit. Should the postmaster find that letters had been written to several persons, and enclosed in one envelope as a measure of economy in postage, he was supposed to collect twenty-five cents from each person so receiving a letter. Mr. Haight erected a small building sixteen by twenty-six feet, one and a half story, in the summer of 1837, for a postoffice, near 107 South Madison street. There were about twenty-five boxes. This building was used until the following year, when Mr. Haight erected a more commodious structure, near 312 East State street, with ante-room and boxes. This building was used for this purpose during several administrations.

The act establishing the county had provided that until public buildings should be erected, the circuit courts should be held at the house of Mr. Kent or Mr. Haight, as the county commissioners should direct. At the first session of this court it was ordered that, pending the location of the county seat, the circuit courts should be held at the house of Mr. Haight. An examination at the circuit clerk's office reveals the almost incredible fact that no records of this court previous to 1854, except the simple dockets of the judge, have been preserved.

The conclusion must be drawn that this docket was the only record made at the time. Memoranda kept by individuals have given facts upon which the official records are silent.

The first circuit court convened at the house of Daniel S. Haight, October 6, 1837. This is the frame building which stood on the northeast corner of Madison and State streets, and a part of which is now on the northeast corner of Second and Walnut streets. At that time there was no elective judiciary. Under the old constitution, the justices of the supreme court and the judges of the inferior courts were appointed by joint ballot of both branches of the general assembly. Under this same fundamental law, these courts appointed their own clerks. The state's attorney was also appointed. The statute of 1835 provided that the general assembly, on joint ballot, at that session, and every two years thereafter, should choose one state's attorney for each judicial circuit.

At this first court Hon. Dan. Stone, of Galena, was the presiding judge. Seth B. Farwell was appointed state's attorney pro tem; and James Mitchell, then of Jo Daviess county, clerk. Mr. Mitchell held this position until 1846, when he was chosen superintendent of the lead mines. He was succeeded as clerk by Jason Marsh, who was appointed by Judge Thomas C. Brown. The offices of circuit clerk and recorder were separate until the second constitution went into effect, when they were united, and this officer was made elective.

The petit jurors on duty at the first term were: Edward Cating, James B. Martyn, Joel Pike, William Pepper, Richard Montague, Isaac N. Cunningham, Thatcher Blake, Henry Thurston, Charles I. Horsman, David Goodrich, James Jackson, and Cyrus C. Jenks. There were but two trials by jury, and these were of very little importance.

The sessions of May, 1838, and April 18, 1839, were also held at Mr. Haight's house; although, for convenience, a room in the Rockford House, on the corner west, was actually used when more room was required. The first grand jury was impaneled at the May term, 1838. The names of this jury were: Anson Barnum, Lyman Amsden, Isaac Johnson, James Sayre, H. M. Wattles, Asa Daggett, H. W. Gleason, Samuel Gregory, Asa Crosby, Daniel Beers, Walter Earle, Isaac Hance, Benjamin T. Lee, E. H. Potter, Paul D. Taylor, Lyman B. Carrier, Aaron Felts, Cyrus C. Jenks, James B. Martyn, Livingston Robbins, Henry Enoch, and Luman Pettibone. Anson Barnum was

appointed foreman. At this term the usual order was reversed, in that the judge occupied one of the few chairs in the house, while the jury "sat on the bench."

The first building erected for the use of courts and religious meetings was built by Mr. Haight, in the summer of 1838, on the southeast corner of Madison and Market streets, on the site of the American House. It was a frame structure, about sixteen by thirty-two feet, with one story. This house, with additions, is now the residence of William G. Conick. In this building were probably held the sessions of November, 1839, and April, 1840. Several of the lawyers who attended the courts in those days attained distinction in their profession. Among these may be mentioned Judge Drummond, then of Galena, who removed to Chicago and became a judge of a federal court; Thompson Campbell, of Galena; Joel Wells, who canvassed the district for congress; Norman B. Judd, of Chicago; and Seth B. Farwell and Martin P. Sweet, of Freeport. The famous John Wentworth, "Long John," made his maiden speech in Rockford, as attorney in a case that promised to bring him prominently before the public. Mr. Wentworth made frequent visits to Rockford in later years; and for several terms he represented the Belvidere district in congress.

September 12, 1840, the county purchased the abandoned building on North First street, which had been commenced by the First Congregational church two years before. The consideration was six hundred dollars. The deed was executed by H. B. Potter, E. H. Potter and S. D. Preston. Since the building had been abandoned by the Congregationalist people it had been used as a carpenter's shop. When the county obtained possession the building was partially finished so that the courts could be held there. The session of September 10, 1840, and subsequent sessions were held at this place, until the transfer of the court house to the West side.



## CHAPTER XX.

### THE STAGE COACH.—EARLY HOTELS.—VILLAGE PLATS.

THE state roads naturally prepared the way for the stage coach. The railroad had not then reached this western region, and the only common carrier was "the coach and four." Stage lines were then running from Chicago in several directions. They carried mails, passengers and light parcels. Frink, Walker & Co. became famous throughout this region as the proprietors of the one stage line which connected Chicago with Rockford. It is impossible to determine the precise date when the stage coach began to make regular trips on this line as far west as Rockford. It is certain that it had thus become an established institution not later than January 1, 1838. On that day the arrival of the stage coach in Rockford attracted the attention of the people of the village, and large numbers came from the surrounding country to witness the spectacle. The stage office in Chicago was for a long time at 123 Lake street, and later at the southwest corner of Lake and Dearborn.

Frink, Walker & Co. first ran their stage lines only from Chicago to Rockford. The coaches were always drawn by four horses. In 1840 the schedule time from Chicago to Rockford was advertised to be twenty-four hours. Horses were changed at intervals of fifteen miles, at stations built for this purpose. Frink, Walker & Co.'s stage barn in Rockford was the well known barn near the intersection of State and Third streets, and faced north and south. It was built in 1836 for Mr. Haight by Sidney Twogood and Thomas Lake. Few buildings in the county have served more diverse uses. It was there the first patriotic exercises were held; there the First Congregational people first held public services on the East side. When Frink, Walker & Co. purchased the building, it was moved a few rods west, and turned to face east and west. There the first quarterly meeting of the First Methodist church was held in the summer of 1838.

Coaches left the main office in Chicago every Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday, and returned on alternate days. The fare from Chicago to Rockford was five dollars. Mrs. Charles H.

Spafford writes as follows of her first journey: "From Chicago I traveled by stage, one of the old 'Frink & Walker's,' stopping at night in one of the extremely primitive wayside inns of that early period. The accommodations were not extensive nor luxurious in these little hostleries. I was awakened in the night by a light in my room, and saw a man at the foot of my bed, busy with two large mail bags. It was the postmaster changing the mail. Remembering the limitations of the place, I immediately took in the situation, and made no outcry. It was a dreary ride from Chicago to Rockford in the old stage, and I was very glad to arrive at the end of my journey, where my brother was waiting for me at the Rockford House."

From Rockford to Galena the stage line was conducted for a time by John D. Winters, of Elizabeth, a little town south of Galena. The route first passed through Elizabeth, but subsequently the more direct route was by way of Freeport. The first stopping-place west of Rockford was Twelve-Mile Grove. Mr. Winters retired from the business after a time, and then Frink, Walker & Co. had the entire line from Chicago to Galena. William Cunningham, who still resides in this city, was in the employ of this firm at one time as a driver between Twelve-Mile Grove and Freeport.

The first hotel in Rockford was the Rockford House. The early public houses were more generally called taverns. Before the Rockford House was built, Mr. Kent and a number of the other settlers had entertained strangers, but not as regular hotel-keepers. The Rockford House was built by Daniel S. Haight and Charles S. Oliver. It stood on the site of the Young Men's Christian Association building. The wing was finished in the autumn of 1837, when the house was opened by Henry Thurston. The third story, which was divided into two rooms, was reached by a ladder, which was made by slats nailed to two pieces of the studding, in the first story of the main building. The proprietor's son John was an important functionary. He made the beds and escorted the guests up the ladder when they retired. He was admonished by his sire not to drop the melted tallow from the dip upon his guests. Mr. Thurston's successors as landlord were Lathrop Johnson, Daniel Howell, Andrew Brown, J. Schaeffer, Abel Campbell, E. Radcliff, Major John Williamson.

The second hotel, the Washington House, was built in 1838 by two brothers, Jacob B. and Thomas Miller, and opened to

the public the following year. It stood sixty feet front on State street, with large additions in the rear, with basement kitchen, dining-room, and sleeping apartments above the dining-room. The street in front was graded down, and ten or twelve steps were built. This elevation above the street-level proved quite a serious objection, and the house was abandoned, and it stood vacant for some years. The ground was then excavated, the house turned to the street, and lowered to the grade. The name of this hotel was changed to the Rock River House. A part of the building stands on 307 East State street, and is occupied as a fruit store. Another part is the saloon building on the southeast corner of State and Madison streets. The successive proprietors of the house were: Jacob Miller, David Paul, McKenney & Tyler, E. S. Blackstone, W. Fulton, H. D. Searles, L. Caldwell.

The Log Tavern, known as the Stage House, was opened in 1838. It was built on the old Second National Bank corner. Brown's Cottage was opened in 1850, by Andrew Brown. The name was changed to the American House in 1852 by G. S. Moore. The Waverly and the Union House, near the Northwestern depot, on the West side, were opened in 1852. The Inn, which was located where the Chick House now stands, was opened in 1840 by Spencer & Fuller. The Eagle Hotel was opened in 1841. It was located on South Main street, in the third block below State.

In 1837-38 several towns were projected in Winnebago county. One was on the east side of the river, on what was called Big Bottom, nearly opposite the stone quarry. A man named Wattles staked out his farm into lots and streets, and called it Scipio; but even its classic name did not give it prestige. The proprietor built the only house ever completed. The stakes remained for several years, until they were plowed under by the owner, who could not give away his lots.

Another town was started by the river, at what is known as the old Shumway place. At one time there were from thirty-five to forty frames erected there; but only a few of them were ever enclosed. This fact gave the place the appropriate name of "Rib-town." Later many of these frames were torn down and removed. Several were taken to new farms, and others were brought to Rockford. It is certain that two or three "Rib-town" frames were re-erected in the city. One was owned



by Jonathan Hitchcock, and located on North Second street; and another by a Mr. Ricard, on the same street. One frame was placed beside the Shumway house, as a part of it. Mark Beaubien finished one two-story house, and occupied it with his family for two or three years, when they removed to Chicago.

In 1839-40 George W. Lee platted a town on the west or upper side of Kishwaukee river, at its junction with Rock river, in what is now New Milford township. Quite a town was actually built, with two stores and a blacksmith shop. A large building for a seminary was enclosed and partially finished, but it was never used for this purpose. Although an excellent building, and standing in a sightly place, it was allowed to remain until all the windows were broken out. The frame was finally torn down and the lumber hauled away. This first attempt to found a seminary in Winnebago county will be considered in the next chapter. Both "Rib-town" and Mr. Lee's plat were named Kishwaukee; but the former was abandoned before George W. Lee platted the second. The latter was sometimes called Leetown, in honor of its founder.

Colonel James Sayre, a settler of 1835, projected the village of Newburg. He built a sawmill and afterward put up a gristmill in the same building, which began to grind early in the winter of 1837-38. Colonel Sayre carried on the business for several years. It was the first gristmill built in the northern counties, and was of great value to the settlers. Mr. Thurston says he went there with a bushel of wheat on his pony the third day after the machinery started. There was no bolting apparatus, and the meal was sifted by hand. The machinery was crude, and the mill was abandoned. Newburg is today only a cross-roads, with nothing to remind the visitor of the time when it was considered a rival of Belvidere and Rockford.

Perhaps few persons now living have ever heard of the Vanceborough postoffice. Vanceborough was another name for Twelve-Mile Grove, on the State road, about halfway from Rockford to Freeport. Ephraim Sumner settled near there in 1835. Mr. Sumner was born in Winhall, Vermont, February 9, 1808. In 1810 his parents removed to Darien, New York, where they remained until 1821, when they settled in Massachusetts. Mr. Sumner engaged in milling and farming near Twelve-Mile Grove, and became an extensive land-owner. He represented this district in the twenty-sixth general assembly, and held several minor civil offices. Mr. Sumner married a sister of

Thatcher Blake. Their children are Hon. E. B. Sumner and Mrs. Annie S. Lane. Mr. Sumner was one of the very few early settlers who accumulated a large fortune. His last years were spent in Rockford. Mr. Sumner died October 18, 1887. February 11, 1845, Mr. Sumner was commissioned postmaster at Vanceborough. He was to retain the office during the pleasure of the postmaster-general. The commission is signed by C. Wickliffe, who was postmaster-general during the administration of John Tyler. The seal is the figure of a man on horseback, with a small mail-bag upon his back. Both man and horse are apparently in great haste to reach the next station. This commission, now in possession of Hon. E. B. Sumner, is well preserved, although it was issued fifty-five years ago. The elder Sumner built a stone house at Vanceborough, which is still in a good state of preservation, and has well nigh outlived the memory of the town. These primitive villages along the old stage lines were superseded by the railway station, and they now scarcely live in memory.

## CHAPTER XXI.

DR. A. M. CATLIN.—THE FOOTE BROTHERS.—FIRST SEMINARY IDEA.

DR. A. M. CATLIN emigrated to Illinois from the Western Reserve, in Ohio, in February, 1838, in company with the Rev. Hiram Foote and Silas Tyler. This party traveled the entire distance in wagons. They were of New England stock, and were part of a movement to found an institution of learning similar to the one then flourishing at Oberlin, Ohio.

The brothers, Hiram, Lucius and Horatio Foote, all clergymen, were prominent in this movement. They were more or less influenced by the example of the Rev. Charles G. Finney, the famous revivalist and founder of the Oberlin institution. Mr. Ira Baker, Rev. Lewis Sweasy, James S. Morton, a Mr. Field, and others moved from the Western Reserve to Rockford about the same time, and under the same influences. Upon their arrival in Rockford, the only hotel to be found was a double log cabin, and the only bed discovered by Doctor Catlin for himself and boy was a thinly covered, dislocated and dislocating stratum of oak shakes, supported at the sides by the naked logs—a Spartan bed for a cold night. Horace, a fourth brother of the Footes, had preceded the others by a year, and secured a log cabin on Rock river, about two miles above Rockford. Into this single room, with a small loft, were crowded three families, with several children.

Dr. Catlin moved to a log cabin on the bluff overlooking Big Bottom, four miles north of Rockford. A Hoosier by the name of Shores had worn a slight track between his home back on the hills and a plowed field on the Bottom, and this was the only road near the Doctor's new home. A small, inconstant, near-by stream, like the road, lost itself in the dry prairie.

At that time Dr. Catlin intended to abandon the practice of medicine. To feed his little family, he hired a broken prairie of Herman B. Potter, who lived two miles south of Rockford. This land, six miles from home, the Doctor cultivated under difficulties, for it soon became known to the scattered people that he was a physician, and, like Cincinnatus, he was called from the plow. He was not a man to deny the necessities of



others; and against his wishes at the time, he was drawn into the practice of his profession, which he continued until near the day of his death, nearly sixty years later. He had practiced in early life in New York and Ohio, and his entire professional service lasted seventy years. He died in 1892, at the age of ninety-one.

On one occasion while at work on the Potter place, Dr. Catlin was summoned to visit a sick person on the Kishwaukee. He took his horse from the furrow near sunset, and, sending his boy of eight on foot six miles northward to the lonely cabin on the prairie, he himself rode southward to his patient. He soon learned that his profession was a jealous mistress, and abandoned farming.

The missionary educational managers had selected the mouth of the Kishwaukee as the site of their institution. A large building was begun, but never completed, and the useless frame survived for years as evidence of the untimeliness of their effort. An Indian wigwam still survived on the same site. The Indians, after their bloody victory over the indiscreet militia at Stillman's Run, had abandoned the region, and the military expedition, which included Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis, had been withdrawn. Silver brooches, arrow heads and the like were found beside the deep, narrow Indian trails that wound about the bluffs and across the prairies. Kishwaukee, however, soon had about forty frame dwellings, and Dr. Catlin, Mr. Tyler, Mr. Field, Mr. Johnson and others resided there.

Lucius and Horace Foote had staid by the log house of the latter, and Dr. Catlin, whose wife and Mrs. Lucius Foote were sisters, was induced by this fact and other reasons, to build in this neighborhood, which he did. He hewed the logs and the floor puncheons, and split the roof shakes with his own hands. His door and door-frames were made from purchased material, but lacked glazing or other filling for the skylight. As he sat one evening "under his own vine and fig tree," not yet planted, there passed a load of noisy revelers. As they drove furiously by, they shook out a wagon end-board that exactly filled the skylight aperture, and completed the house, which the builder probably enjoyed as much as any he ever occupied; that is, in the recollection of it.

Although Rockford was from the first clearly indicated as the coming metropolis, by the ford which gave its name, yet Kishwaukee below and Winnebago above were "boomed." In those days they could compare population with Rockford.

Dr. Catlin finally settled in Rockford about 1839, and entered upon a medical practice which, if not large, was very "wide," as it carried him from Roscoe and above on the north, to Stillman's Run on the south, and from Twelve-Mile Grove and beyond to Belvidere. Much of this was night riding. After the settlers' horses had done their day's work, and after the fall of darkness, in the silence of the night, when watchers became nervous, in the midst of storms and when the primitive household lights burned pale, was the accepted time to send for the medical comforter; and the nocturnal "Hollo, Doctor!" was often heard above the storm at the physician's door. He was never ill, and never refused to answer the call. Even when his own horse failed, he was mounted behind the messenger, and rode out in the night to relieve the sick. Once he was persuaded to mount the back of a sturdy messenger, who bore him and his precious medicine-bag through the swellings of icy Kishwaukee.

The year 1846 was signalized by much sickness. Nearly every family living on low land had malarial fever, and the doctors were busy people. At one time Dr. Catlin could get but four or five hours' sleep out of the twenty-four, and he would become so exhausted that he frequently slept while riding from house to house. One day's ride, for example, included a trip of several miles north of Rockford, and then a tour south beyond the Killbuck, and a return by Cherry Valley, closing the day's work in the following morning. Thirty calls were made, and sixty patients prescribed for on that occasion. During this season Dr. Goodhue was asked what could be done for the sick. To this grave question the Doctor made this characteristic reply: "I don't know unless we build a big smoke-house and *cure* them," referring to the almost universal pallor. Dr. Catlin was an indulgent creditor, and fully shared the burden and poverty of early days.

As a practitioner, Dr. Catlin was distinguished by a combination of conservatism and independence of thought and method. It was said of him by one who knew him well, that "as a careful examiner, close reasoner, and with ability to define and state cause and effect, Dr. Catlin had few superiors." This fact, with his large experience and unobtrusive, non-self-assertive spirit, attracted the regard of his brother practitioners; so that he was often consulted by them in difficult cases. Near the close of his life he was honored by them with a spontaneous tender of a reception and banquet, an honor which he highly appreciated.

## CHAPTER XXII.

DR. JOSIAH C. GOODHUE.—DR. ALDEN THOMAS.

THE year 1838 was signalized by the advent of several physicians who became prominent in early local history. Among this number was Dr. Josiah C. Goodhue, who settled in the autumn, with his family. He had been here the preceding autumn on a tour of inspection. Dr. Goodhue had attained some distinction before he became a citizen of this county. He was born in 1803, at Putney, Vermont. His mother is said to have been a cousin of Aaron Burr. The Doctor was graduated from the school of medicine at Yale, and began practice at St. Thomas, Upper Canada, in 1824. While there he was married to Miss Catherine Dunn. A brother, Sir George Goodhue, was in the employ of the Canadian government. The Doctor emigrated from Canada to Chicago in 1835. He was the first resident physician in that city outside the garrison of Fort Dearborn. When Chicago was incorporated as a city in 1837, Dr. Goodhue was elected the first alderman from the First ward. There were six wards in the city at that time. William B. Ogden was chosen mayor in that year. Dr. Goodhue designed the first city seal of Chicago, and it became known as his little baby. He was quite proud of his offspring. The Doctor was the real founder of the first free school system of Chicago. He was one of a committee appointed to solicit subscriptions for the first railroad chartered to run from the city, the Galena & Chicago Union.

In his practice in Chicago, Dr. Goodhue was associated with Dr. Daniel Brainard. Their office was on Lake street, near the old Tremont House. John Wentworth and Ebenezer Peck were engaged in the practice of law in the same building. Dr. Goodhue was one of the men who drew the act of incorporation for Rush Medical college, and was a member of the first board of trustees.

Dr. Goodhue's first house in Rockford was what was then known as the "ball alley," on the northwest corner of Madison and Walnut streets, where the *Golden Censer* brick building was subsequently erected. He afterward purchased a home on the



site of the watch factory; and the house was moved away when the factory was built. The lot had at one time a pleasant grove, with no fence. Reference was made in a preceding chapter to the fact that Dr. Goodhue gave to the city of Rockford its name.

Dr. Goodhue had thirteen children, five of whom died under five years of age. Four sons and four daughters attained adult life. One son, George Washington Goodhue, died of yellow fever, in Mexico, during the war with that country. Another son, William Sewell, died from illness contracted during the civil war. He had read law with James L. Loop. Dr. Goodhue's oldest daughter, Mrs. C. F. Holland, widow of John A. Holland, and step-mother of H. P. Holland, now resides in Chicago. Mrs. Hoyt Barnum, another daughter, is a resident of Rockford.

Dr. Goodhue is said to have taken the skull from the body of Big Thunder, the Indian chief, whose resting-place was on the court house mound in Belvidere. Big Thunder was a noted character among the Pottawatomies. His name may have been suggested, according to Indian fashion, by his heavy, rolling voice. His burial-place was selected on the highest point of ground. No grave was dug. The chief was wrapped in his blankets, and seated on a rude bench, with his feet resting on an Indian rug. His face was turned toward the west, where he expected a great battle to be fought between his tribe and another. A palisade, made of split white ash logs, from which the bark had been peeled, was placed around his body, and covered with bark. The battle which Big Thunder looked for, never came; and his war-spirit never re-animated his mouldering clay and joined in the victorious whoops of his braves over their vanquished foes. The Indians, as they passed the coop of their fallen chief, would throw tobacco into his lap; and Simon P. Doty, an early settler, during a torturing tobacco famine, would systematically purloin the weed from Big Thunder. In those days Belvidere was on the stage route from Chicago to Galena; and Big Thunder became the prey of relic hunters. His skull found its way, by Dr. Goodhue, into Rush Medical college, and it was probably destroyed in the great fire of 1871.

Dr. Goodhue was an interesting and eccentric character. A story was current in the early days to the effect that a certain doctor had heard that Dr. Goodhue had said that he had killed Mr. Smith's child. The offended practitioner determined to call

upon Dr. Goodhue and make inquiry concerning the rumor. Dr. Goodhue saw him coming, surmised at once his errand, and met his offended friend at the door in his most cordial manner. "I am very glad to see you, sir; come in." This reception embarrassed the visitor, but he unburdened his mind in this wise: "Dr. Goodhue, I hear that you have said that I killed Smith's child." Dr. Goodhue interrupted him with this startling revelation: "Haven't you killed more than one? Lord, I've killed more than forty. If you haven't killed more than one, you are no doctor at all!" The Doctor gave the name of "Cedar Bend" to the seminary ground, that slopes toward the river, upon which there were many cedars.

Dr. Goodhue's death was the result of an accident, on the night of December 31, 1847. He was called to make a professional visit to the family of Richard Stiles, four miles west on the State road. After caring for his patient, he accompanied Mrs. Stoughton, a neighbor, to her home. The night was dark, and he fell into a well, which was then being excavated, and had not been covered or enclosed. Mrs. Stoughton had asked him to wait until she returned with a light; but before she came back the Doctor had made the fatal fall. He survived only a short time after he was taken from the well. His death was deplored by the entire community. He was a positive character; nature had liberally endowed him in qualities of mind and heart. Dr. Goodhue was an attendant at the Unitarian church. Mrs. Goodhue was an Episcopalian. She died October 14, 1873. A son of Dr. Goodhue died November 14, 1880.

Dr. Alden Thomas was born at Woodstock, Vermont, November 11, 1797, and was a lineal descendant from John Alden. He was married to Elizabeth Marsh, June 15, 1824. In the autumn of 1839, the family came to Rockford. They had lived in the meantime at Bethany and Holly, New York. During the first few weeks in Rockford the family lived in the Brinckerhoff house, which still stands on the corner north of the government building. Later Dr. Thomas resided for a few months in a house which stood on the site of the Emerson warehouse, just south of the Chicago & Northwestern railroad bridge. In the following spring Dr. Thomas built a house opposite the court house. He practiced medicine about five or six years, and then removed to a farm two miles south on the Kishwaukee road, where he lived about two years. The family then returned

to the village, and lived for a time in a house still standing on South Second street, and later in the grout house near the corner west of the First Congregational church, which Dr. Thomas built. He opened a drug store soon after his return from the farm, and continued in this business until a short time before his death. Dr. Thomas was a member of the First Congregational church, and played the bass viol there for some time. A book of music, with words and notes copied by him in a clear, beautiful hand, is now in possession of his daughter, Mrs. W. A. Dickerman. Dr. and Mrs. Thomas are held in loving remembrance by the early residents of the city.

Dr. Thomas' children are: Mrs. W. A. Dickerman, E. P. Thomas, and the late Mrs. S. J. Caswell, of this city, and F. A. Thomas and Mrs. Evans Blake, of Chicago. Henry, the youngest son, enlisted in the army during the civil war, and was drowned while returning on a furlough. Dr. Thomas' death occurred March 21, 1856.



## CHAPTER XXIII.

DR. GEORGE HASKELL.—THE GIPSY: THE FIRST STEAMER.

ON the morning of April 16, 1838, Dr. Haskell and family, Mowry Brown and wife, Samuel Haskell, H. H. Silsby, Isaiah Lyon, Caleb Blood and William Hull boarded the steamboat Gipsy at Alton, Illinois. The destination of this party was Rockford. The river was high, the bottom lands were overflowed, and the boat sometimes left the channel of the Mississippi and ran across points of land, and once went through a grove of timber. When the Gipsy arrived at Rock Island and ran alongside the wharf-boat, a strong wind from the east turned the bow out into the stream. As the boat turned, the rudder struck the wharf-boat, and broke the tiller ropes. This accident rendered the boat unmanageable, and it was blown across the river to Davenport, Iowa. While at Rock Island Dr. Haskell contracted with the captain that upon his return from Galena he would steam up Rock river to Rockford. At Savanna, Samuel Haskell, William Hull and H. H. Silsby left the Gipsy. They had come to the conclusion that the boat would never reach Rockford; and in company with Moses Wallen, of Winnebago village, where the county seat had been located by the special commissioners, they started afoot for Rockford. They stopped over night at Cherry Grove, and the next morning they traveled to Crane's Grove, on the stage route from Dixon to Galena. There they hired a coach and team, which brought them that evening to Loomis' Hotel.

Mr. Silsby writes that a few days after his arrival he arose one morning as soon as it was light, to see if he could discover any sign of the Gipsy. He was rewarded by the sight of dense, black smoke, near Corey's bluff, which seemed to be moving up the river. Soon the Gipsy came in sight, and the people gathered on the banks of the river and cheered the boat as it ascended in fine style until nearly over the rapids, when it suddenly turned, swung around, and went down stream much faster than it ascended. It rounded to and tried it again, and soon turned down stream a second time. After several attempts, with the aid of a quantity of lard thrown into the furnaces, the boat ran

up the swift current, and soon tied up to the bank in front of Platt & Sanford's store, which stood near the water's edge, in the rear of the Masonic Temple site. The Gipsy was the first steamer that visited Rockford. It was a stern-wheeler, not less than one hundred feet in length, and perhaps thirty in width. It had a cabin above the hold, and an upper deck, open and uncovered. There were several state-rooms. G. A. Sanford and John Platt had come to Rockford the preceding year, and had formed a partnership in conducting the first store on the West side. Mr. Sanford sold his interest to Dr. Haskell. The following year Mr. Platt retired and Dr. Haskell became sole owner. When the Gipsy arrived the Doctor's eleven tons of merchandise were removed from the boat to the store. A merchant at Beloit had shipped ten tons from Rock Island to Beloit, which were to be delivered at that point. The people came in from the country, and chartered the boat for an excursion up the river, and carried passengers. The captain said he never witnessed such a scene before. They danced all night, and kept the cabin in an uproar day and night until they reached Rockton. The music was furnished by Andrew Lovejoy, who played the flute, and another man with his fiddle.

Dr. Haskell was a native of Massachusetts. He was born at Harvard, March 23, 1799. His father, Samuel Haskell, removed to Waterford, Maine, in 1803. In 1821 the son went to Phillips Exeter academy, and entered Dartmouth college in 1823. He left his college class in his sophomore year, and studied medicine until 1827, when he received the degree of M. D. from the college. While in college, he taught one term of district school in East Haverhill. One of his pupils was John G. Whittier; and the schoolmaster in Whittier's "Snow-Bound" was his former teacher. On page thirty-four of Samuel T. Pickard's *Life and Letters of Whittier*, is found this allusion to the hero of this poem: "Until near the end of Mr. Whittier's life, he could not recall the name of this teacher whose portrait is so carefully sketched, but he was sure he came from Maine. At length, he remembered that the name was Haskell, and from this clue it has been ascertained that he was George Haskell, and that he came from Waterford, Maine." Dr. Haskell never appeared to have been aware of the fact that his gifted Haverhill pupil had immortalized him in "Snow-Bound." Dr. Haskell also received this tribute as a teacher from his illustrious pupil, as given in a later chapter of Mr. Pickard's biography: "He

[Whittier] was accustomed to say that only two of the teachers who were employed in that district during his school days were fit for the not very exacting position they occupied. Both of these were Dartmouth students: one of them George Haskell, to whom reference has already been made." Dr. Haskell began the practice of medicine at East Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1827, and removed to Ashby, in the same state, in the following year.

Dr. Haskell came to Illinois in 1831, and settled at Edwardsville, and two years later he removed to Upper Alton. While there he became one of the founders of Shurtleff college, of which he was trustee and treasurer. The Doctor built up a large practice, which he soon abandoned. November 7, 1837, the cause of the slave received its first baptism of blood. On that day Rev. Elijah P. Lovejoy was murdered at Alton, for his bold utterances in behalf of an oppressed race. Dr. Haskell entertained radical anti-slavery views, and he determined to leave that portion of the state in which the pro-slavery sentiment was largely predominant.

From the time of his arrival in Rockford until his removal from the city about twenty-eight years later, Dr. Haskell was a broad-minded, representative man of affairs. He conducted for a short time a mercantile business on the river bank, as the successor of Platt & Sanford. But his ruling passion was horticulture. He entered from the government quite a tract of land lying north of North street, and built the house on North Main street now occupied by George R. Forbes. He planted a nursery and became an expert in raising fruit. It is said that one year he raised sixty bushels of peaches. The severe winter of 1855-56 killed his trees, and from that time he devoted his attention to more hardy fruits. His later Rockford home was on North Court street, near the residence of Hon. Andrew Ashton. Dr. Haskell was generous and public-spirited. He and his brother-in-law, John Edwards, presented to the city the West side public square, which was named Haskell park, in honor of the former. A street, called Edwards place, forms the southern boundary of the park. A ward schoolhouse in West Rockford also bears Dr. Haskell's name.

In 1853 Dr. Haskell became a convert to Spiritualism, and his long and honored membership with the First Baptist church ceased on the last day of that year. It has been stated that he was first alienated from the church by his lack of esteem for



Elder Jacob Knapp, who was then a prominent member. Mrs. Haskell followed her husband, and withdrew from the church May 6, 1854. Dr. Haskell entered upon his new religious life with that energy and enthusiasm which had signalized his former adherence to Baptist doctrine. April 15, 1854, he began the publication of the *Spirit Advocate*, an eight-page monthly. The paper was an able propagandist of the new faith. A complete file of this paper has been preserved in the Rockford public library. Twenty-three numbers were published. In the issue of March 15, 1856, the editor announced that the publication of the *Advocate* would be discontinued, and that it would be consolidated with the *Orient*, under the name of the *Orient and Advocate*, with headquarters at Waukegan. In his farewell address to his constituents, Dr. Haskell said: "While hitherto laboring in the cause of human advancement from the thrall-dom of bigotry, error and superstition, we have had the consciousness of having acted honestly in proclaiming 'the glorious gospel of the blessed God.' We feel that the cause is of God and must prevail; and the combined force of men and devils can not prevent its final triumph. . . . The great contest between truth and error has commenced; and the advocates of error and superstition are arraying all their forces to withstand the onward march of truth and harmony; but truth *must triumph* over all opposing foes."

The best and most charitable commentary upon this prophecy is in the lines of Tennyson:

"Our little systems have their day;  
They have their day, and cease to be."

In 1866, Dr. Haskell removed to New Jersey. There he was engaged in founding an industrial school, and purchased with others a tract of four thousand acres, which was laid out for a model community. In 1857 Dartmouth college gave the Doctor the degree of A. B., as of the year 1827.

Dr. Haskell died at Vineland, New Jersey, August 23, 1876. The late George S. Haskell, widely known as a seedsman, was a son; and Mrs. Henry P. Kimball is a daughter. Dr. Frank H., Willis M. and Carl Kimball are grandsons. His nephew, Rev. Samel Haskell, pays him this tribute in Pickard's work, previously noted: "He was a man of scholarship and enthusiasm, a friend of struggling students, many of whom he befriended in his home and with his means."

## CHAPTER XXIV.

JAMES M. WIGHT.—JASON MARSH.—OTHER PIONEERS OF 1838-39.

JAMES MADISON WIGHT was born in Norwich, Massachusetts, in 1810. He was admitted to the bar of Queens county, New York, in 1837, and immediately afterward came west. He first joined his brother, J. Ambrose Wight, in Rockton. But he found no field in that village for the practice of his profession; and he came in 1838, to Rockford, where for a time he taught school. In his early life he served a few terms as city attorney of Rockford. He was one of the pioneer lawyers of northern Illinois, and built up a large practice. He was for many years local attorney for the Chicago & Northwestern railroad and for other corporations. He was also for a time a member of the state legislature, and served on the judiciary committee. Mr. Wight was a member of the constitutional convention of 1870, called to draft a new constitution for submission to the voters of the state. To Mr. Wight, law was not merely a profession; it was an absorbing and delightful study. He was above all, a student; a perfect cyclopedia of general information, familiar with the literature of many languages, which he read in the original, and a passionate lover of classical music and art. Mr. Wight was a cousin of George Bancroft, the famous historian. To many lawyers of today, Mr. Wight's sense of professional honor might seem a little strained; but for him there was only one standard, the standard of a Christian gentleman, and to that conception his business principles were subordinated. Mr. Wight died in Rockford in 1877, leaving to his children the heritage of an honest name, and the memory of a modest, blameless and tender life. Mr. Wight was the father of Mrs. Harriott Wight Sherratt, Miss Mary Wight, and Miss Carrie, who died in 1891. In his religious views, Mr. Wight was a Channing Unitarian. The Wight school in the Sixth ward was named in his honor. His home was the residence now owned by Judge L. L. Morrison.

Jason Marsh was born in Woodstock, Windsor county, Vermont, in 1807. At the age of sixteen he removed to Saratoga,



New York. In 1831 he was admitted to the bar in Adams, Jefferson county, where he first practiced. In 1832 Mr. Marsh married Harriet M. Spafford, a sister of Charles, John and Catlin Spafford. Mr. Marsh came to Rockford in 1839. He was accompanied by his wife and children, a brother and wife, and his three brothers-in-law. Soon after his arrival he and the three Spafford brothers built the brick house three miles south of State street, on the Kishwaukee road, now occupied by F. J. Morey. A large farm was attached. Mr. Marsh drove daily to the village, where he practiced his profession. His later home was the residence subsequently owned by the late W. W. Fairfield, on East State street. These beautiful grounds are now subdivided. In 1862 Mr. Marsh entered military service as colonel of the Seventy-fourth Illinois infantry. He was severely wounded at the battle of Missionary Ridge in the autumn of 1863, and returned home. Two months later he again went to the front. In the campaign from Chattanooga to Atlanta his old wound troubled him, and he resigned. Colonel Marsh was a man of fine presence, rather above medium height, portly, and perhaps slightly pompous, with blue eyes. The corner of the left eye was slightly marred by a wound received in his younger days. He was accustomed to comb the hair low over the eye, and thus unconsciously gave to the eye a little wicked expression. Colonel Marsh was very courteous, and extremely fond of society. He delighted in picturesque costumes. His favorite suit was a blue dress coat with gilt buttons, buff vest and light pantaloons. Colonel Marsh was a lover of games; chess was his favorite. He forgot everything when engaged in a game of chess, and spent long afternoons and evenings at this pastime, oblivious of everything else; much, of course, to the detriment of his business. Colonel Marsh, or 'Squire Marsh, as he was often called, was a gentleman of striking characteristics. He preserved the courtliness of the old-school gentleman. His social nature was of a generous kind. He was at home either in long-continued argument, or he could adapt himself to the lighter conversation of gallant and graceful nothings of fashionable society. His habitual attire combined the present and the past with striking effect. His blue swallow-tail coat, buff vest and gold-headed cane are intimately associated with his sturdy personality in the minds of all who remember him. Colonel Marsh was a man of well-stored mind, and made his mark as a lawyer at an early day. His last years were



spent on his farm near Durand. His death occurred at the home of his daughter in Chicago, March 13, 1881. He was buried in Rockford with military honors. His surviving children are: Mrs. E. H. Baker, formerly of Rockford; Mrs. William Ruger, of Batona, Florida; and Cerdric G., of Chicago. Ogden C. died soon after his father. J. M. and Volney Southgate are nephews.

Francis Burnap was born at Merrimac, New Hampshire, January 4, 1796. He belonged to one of the old historic families of New England. His mother was a sister of Major-General Brooks, of Revolutionary fame, who was afterward governor of Massachusetts for seven terms. His father was Rev. Jacob Burnap, who for fifty years was pastor of the First Congregational church of Merrimac. Mr. Burnap settled in Rockford in August, 1839, and began the practice of law in Winnebago and neighboring counties, in the state supreme court, and in the federal courts. His industry and patient persistence in his profession were proverbial. He loved chancery practice, and in the knowledge of this department he had few equals in the state. Mr. Burnap was a man of integrity, and boldly avowed his opinions, however unpopular. He belonged to the Liberty party in its early days, and proclaimed his radical anti-slavery sentiments when abolitionism was a term of reproach even in the free north and west. He was also a believer in total abstinence and woman suffrage. Mr. Burnap was a thorough student. His books were his beloved companions. He was a fine linguist and was proficient in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, French and German. As a friend, he was kind, courteous, and dignified in all his social intercourse. While he was affable in manner, he was firm in his principles, even to sternness. The tenacity with which he clung to his opinions, and earnestly defended them, sometimes excited enmity. He practiced in his profession until 1864, when ill health compelled him to retire. Mr. Burnap died in Rockford December 2, 1866. He was the senior practitioner of the Rockford bar, which adopted resolutions of respect at his death, and attended his funeral in a body. In the forenoon preceding his death he dictated his will, in the full possession of his mental faculties. Mr. Burnap never married, and he lived a somewhat isolated life. Mrs. Lucy M. Gauss, of St. Louis, formerly a teacher in the Rockford schools, is a niece.

Duncan Ferguson was a native of Scotland. He was born in Glasgow, in November, 1810. He attended the University of Glasgow two seasons; was employed several years in the

land surveys, and soon thereafter he was engaged in the trigonometrical surveys of Great Britain, which he continued for ten years. He was employed most of this time in Ireland. In 1837 he left his native land and came to the United States. He first settled in Pennsylvania, where he remained two years, in the employ of two railroad companies, as draughtsman. Mr. Ferguson removed with his family to Rockford in 1839. In 1840 he was elected surveyor and justice of the peace. He held the office of surveyor until 1856. In 1862 he was appointed assessor of internal revenue. He held this position eight years, and then resigned. For ten years Mr. Ferguson was supervisor from the Seventh ward of the city. March, 3, 1873, he was elected chairman of the county board, to succeed Hon. Robert J. Cross, who had died February 15th. Mr. Ferguson retained this position until 1881. In 1877 he was elected mayor of Rockford, and served one year. He held the offices of city engineer, assessor, county treasurer, and commissioner of the county under an act of the legislature for the improvement of Rock river. Mr. Ferguson was a member of the First Baptist church until the schism led by Dr. Kerr, when he became identified with the Church of the Christian Union. Mr. Ferguson was a genial, courtly gentleman, of high character. His death occurred May 14, 1882.

Thomas D. Robertson was born in Edinburgh, Scotland, March 4, 1818. His parents removed to London when he was a small child. He lived with a brother for a time on the Isle of Sheppey, at the mouth of the Thames, where he attended school. He was subsequently engaged with an older brother in the publication of the *Mechanic's Magazine*. Mr. Robertson came to the United States in 1838. He stopped for a time in Chicago, and arrived in Rockford in December of the same year. Mr. Robertson studied law in Rockford and at Madison, Wisconsin. He was admitted to the bar, and was a prominent practitioner for some years. In 1848 Mr. Robertson and John A. Holland opened the first banking house in Rockford in a building adjoining the European Hotel site on West State street. From that time he gradually abandoned the practice of law, and devoted his attention to banking and real estate. Mr. Robertson was a leader in the movement to secure the extension of the Galena & Chicago Union railroad to Rockford. He had charge of the collection of the subscriptions to the capital stock in Boone, Winnebago and Ogle counties. Mr. Robertson



has continuously resided in Rockford for sixty-one years. No other person has been as prominent in its business circles for so long a time. The church and Christian education have always received his financial support. He is a trustee of Beloit college and Rockford college. Mr. Robertson's career has been signalized by strict integrity and exceptional business ability. He is probably the largest property-owner in the city. His children are William T. Robertson, vice-president of the Winnebago National Bank, and Mrs. David N. Starr, of Florida.

Ira W. Baker arrived on Rock river October 6, 1838, on Saturday, at sundown, with his family of eight, from a grandmother of seventy to a babe of four. At half past ten the next morning all went over the hill a mile away to attend church, at the house of Mr. Batchelder. It was a double log house of two rooms. The door between the rooms was the pulpit. The Rev. Hiram Foote preached. No scene could better depict the early sabbath in church. Organ and choir, long-drawn aisle and fretted vault waft no truer praise. The soft sky and the air of the Indian summer, silent woods of gorgeous hues, the reverent worshipers, strangers in form but kindred in heart, the solemn and touching service, and the polite and tender greetings and farewells were home and church to the true and earnest pioneers. Even the little Swiss clock, hanging high in the corner, with its long weights and pendulum, seemed thoughtfully and regretfully to mark the passing moments, and when it must strike twelve it gave due notice, and softly struck its strokes. Perhaps like Tell of its native land, it had prepared for extra work due on such occasions, for it kept right on with thirteen or fourteen, and so forth, until elders and urchins alike smiled upon its little distorted anatomy. The clock, house and owner are now gone, and perhaps all who gathered there; but the church and home of the pioneer are the church and home of today.

Hon. Edward H. Baker, son of Deacon Ira Baker, was born in Ferrisburg, Vermont, April 5, 1828; and when ten years of age he came with his father to Winnebago county. Mr. Baker received his education at Knox college and Illinois college at Jacksonville. He studied law and was admitted to the bar. At one time he was in partnership with his father-in-law, Jason Marsh. Upon the organization of the Rockford & Kenosha railroad, Mr. Baker was chosen secretary of the company. He was elected mayor of Rockford in 1866, and served one year. At the time of his death Mr. Baker was a director of the public



library. His death occurred January 26, 1897. The circuit court, which was then in session, adjourned, out of respect to his memory; Hon. Charles A. Works pronounced a eulogy, and the bar attended his funeral in a body. Mr. Baker excelled as a toastmaster. He was a thorough student, and acquired a large and varied fund of information. He was an authority upon Masonic matters, and in colonial and local history. He had true historic instinct, and his writings often display fine poetic feeling.

Henry N. Baker, another son of Deacon Baker, was also a native of Ferrisburg, Vermont. For many years he was engaged in the real estate and loan business in East Rockford. Mr. Baker was for some time president of the board of education. He removed from the city in 1899.

David S. Penfield was the first of three brothers to settle in Rockford. He was a native of Pittsfield, Vermont, and was born in 1812. Mr. Penfield and the late Shepherd Leach were schoolboys together in their native place, and the friendship then formed continued through life. Together they emigrated to Michigan, where they remained a short time, and then continued their journey on horseback to Illinois, and came to Rockford in 1838 by way of Dixon. There was then no stable currency. Large numbers of private banks furnished a currency of more or less value, and each state had its own issues. The exchange of money in traveling from state to state was therefore attended with not a little difficulty, and considerable risk. The unsettled country was infested with bandits, and travelers were never sure, when seeking entertainment for the night, whether they would escape the snare of the fowler. Mr. Penfield and Mr. Leach adopted a rule that is very suggestive. Whenever they came to the house of a settler where flowers were cultivated, there they concluded they would be safe. Upon their arrival in Rockford, Mr. Penfield and Mr. Leach purchased a large tract of land on the West side. They were also in mercantile business on the site of 322 East State street, and there employed the first tinner in Rockford. Their stock included hardware, groceries and other lines, and invoiced about three thousand dollars. Mr. Penfield lived for a time in a house owned by Lyman Potter, on North Second street. He formed a partnership with his brother John G. in the real estate and loan business; and subsequently became a member of the banking firm of Briggs, Spafford & Penfield, which was merged into

the Third National bank. Mr. Penfield was a very unassuming gentleman, and was universally esteemed. He died May 20, 1873, at the age of sixty-one years. Some years ago Mrs. Penfield gave the site to the Young Men's Christian Association on which its splendid building now stands. Their children are: Mrs. Henry Robinson, deceased; Mrs. C. R. Mower, of Rockford; and Mrs. Stephen A. Norton, of San Diego, California.

Shepherd Leach, to whom reference was made in the preceding paragraph, was an extensive land-owner, and amassed a large estate. Mr. Leach was gifted with keen business sagacity, and was successful in nearly every enterprise. He had an extended acquaintance among business men; was straightforward in his dealings; and withal, was a man who possessed many qualities worthy of emulation. Mr. Leach died July 9, 1885. Mrs. Edgar E. Bartlett and Mrs. J. B. Whitehead are daughters.

Willard Wheeler came from St. Thomas, Upper Canada, in September, 1839. He was the second tinner in the town. Mr. Wheeler was a brother of Solomon Wheeler. He built the house on South First street where Mrs. Julia A. Littlefield resides. To Mr. Wheeler belonged the honor of being the first mayor of Rockford. He died April 24, 1876.

The Cunningham brothers are among the last survivors of that early period. Samuel Cunningham was born August 15, 1815, in Peterboro, Hillsboro county, New Hampshire. This was Daniel Webster's county, and where he and his brother Ezekiel practiced law. Mr. Cunningham heard Mr. Webster deliver an oration, and voted for him for president in 1836. Mr. Cunningham came to this county in the spring of 1839. His active life was devoted to agriculture. He served one term as county commissioner. Mr. Cunningham is a splendid specimen of the sturdy New England type, and the very soul of honor. He has a retentive memory and an interesting fund of political reminiscence. His brother, William Cunningham, came to Rockford in the spring of 1838. He has spent much of the intervening time on the Pacific coast, but is now living a retired life in Rockford. The writer is indebted to these brothers for valuable historical information. Another brother, Benjamin Franklin Cunningham, preceded Samuel to Rockford in the spring of the same year. He owns a beautiful home below the city, on a rise of ground which commands an extended northern and southern view of the river. A fourth brother, Isaac Newton



Cunningham, previously noted, came to Rockford at an earlier date.

Joel B. Potter was born in Fairfield county, Connecticut, in 1810. From there the family removed to Orleans county, New York. He received a collegiate education and prepared himself for the Presbyterian ministry. His health failed, and he never resumed this calling. In 1839 he came to this county, where his brothers Herman B. and Eleazer had preceded him. In the same year Mr. Potter built the house now owned by Judge Morrison. He carried on a farm for some years, and was subsequently engaged in the drug business on East State street. He conducted the store alone for a time, and later with his son-in-law, J. F. Harding, as a partner, until the death of Mr. Harding, in 1867, when Mr. Potter retired from business. Mr. Potter and his family were members of Westminster Presbyterian church. Mr. Potter died November 30, 1880. Mrs. Potter is still living. Advanced age does not impair her intellectual vigor. Mrs. Caroline A. Brazee and Mrs. E. S. Gregory, of Rockford, and Miss Frances D. Potter, of Chicago, are daughters.

The Herrick family came from eastern Massachusetts in 1838-39. Elijah L. Herrick, Sr., and three sons, Ephraim, Elijah L. Jr., and William, arrived in Rockford in 1838; and the following year there came three sons, George, Edward, and Samuel, and four daughters, Phœbe, Sarah, Martha, and Hannah. About 1849 the father of the family built a cobblestone house, which is still standing on Fourteenth avenue. The Herrick family, though typical New England people, possess one interesting trait peculiar to the Scottish clans. It is said this entire family, with one exception, lived in the vicinity of Rockford for forty years, within such distance that all could come together in a few hours' notice. This remarkable fact is seldom paralleled when the size of the family is considered. The father died May 18, 1852; Mrs. Herrick, March 28, 1876; Phoebe, July 13, 1854; Sarah, January 21, 1885; William, February 13, 1885; Ephraim, January 7, 1888; Martha, July 18, 1898. Edward died near Newell, Iowa, September 15, 1899. While a resident of this county he lived on a farm in Cherry Valley township. He removed to Iowa in 1880, and settled on a farm, where he died. He was seventy-seven years of age. One son and one daughter survive. His wife died about eight years ago. George and Hannah Herrick never married. They reside in Rockford. E. L. Herrick and family and Miss Hannah



are members of Westminster Presbyterian church. The other members of this family attended the First Congregational church.

E. L. Herrick was born at Andover, Massachusetts, September 30, 1820. Mrs. Herrick, previous to her marriage, was a teacher in Rockford seminary. She came in September, 1852, and taught three years. They have three children: Elizabeth L., professor of French language and literature at Rockford college; Charles E., assistant cashier of the Manufacturers National Bank; and Frank J., of the firm of Bedwell & Herrick. Mrs. William Marshall, now residing in Florida, is a daughter of Mr. Herrick.

Samuel Herrick was only four years of age when his parents came to this county, and he has continuously resided here since that time. His daughters, Hattie and Clara M., are teachers in the Rockford schools.

The three Spafford brothers came to Rockford in 1839, in company with their brother-in-law, Jason Marsh. Their father was Dr. John Spafford. The eldest son, Charles H. Spafford, was born in Jefferson county, New York, January 6, 1819. He was educated at Castleton, Vermont. He had chosen the profession of the law, but his decision to come west changed his plans in life. Mr. Spafford performed a conspicuous part in the development of the city. He held the offices of postmaster, circuit clerk and recorder. He was president of the Kenosha & Rockford Railroad Company. Mr. Spafford, in company with his brother John, and John Hall, built Metropolitan Hall block. The stores and offices were owned separately and the hall was held in common. Mr. Spafford also, with others, built the block now known as the Chick House. Although Mr. Spafford made a large amount of money, he sustained reverses of fortune. When the banking house of Spafford, Clark & Ellis went into liquidation, he paid all the liabilities of the firm, which were forty-five thousand dollars. Mr. Spafford's splendid service in the early struggles of Rockford college will be noted in the chapter devoted to that subject. March, 8, 1842, Mr. Spafford was united in marriage to Miss Abby Warren. In March, 1892, Mr. and Mrs. Spafford celebrated their golden wedding. Their children are: Mrs. Carrie S. Brett, Mrs. Charles H. Godfrey, and Charles H. Spafford, Jr. Mr. Spafford died in September, 1892, at the age of seventy-three years. He was a genial gentleman; courtesy was the habit of his life.

Amos Catlin Spafford was born September 14, 1824, in Adams, Jefferson county, New York. After he came west he followed farming in this county until 1848. About a year later he was interested in a sawmill on the old water-power on the East side. In 1850 he went to California, where he remained two years. About 1854 he became a member of the banking firm of Briggs, Spafford & Penfield. Upon the organization of the Third National bank in 1864, Mr. Spafford became its president, and held this position thirty-three years, until his death. In 1876 he was one of the state commissioners at the centennial exposition. Mr. Spafford died suddenly at Adams, New York, while on a vacation, August 22, 1897. Mrs. Spafford died May 22, 1898. Their children are: Mrs. J. W. Archibald, who resides in Florida; Miss Jessie I. Spafford, professor of mathematics and physics at Rockford college; George C. Spafford, cashier of the Third National Bank, and Miss Nettie L. Spafford. Genuine worth is self-revealing. Mr. Spafford was a man whose face was an immediate passport to confidence, and it was a true index to his character. His genial disposition, sterling worth and absolute integrity shone out in every feature and expression. He was unostentatious, kind-hearted and neighborly in manner, and stood for the best things in the life of the city. He was conservative in judgment, yet efficient and progressive in business. He was a leading representative of the influential men whose strong and forceful characters have made Rockford a synonym for solidity, enterprise, morality and prosperity.

John Spafford was born November 26, 1821. During his long life in Rockford he was engaged successively in farming, grocery, and grain and lumber trade. In 1856 he became the general agent of the Rockford & Kenosha Railroad company. Until within two years of his death, Mr. Spafford was president of the Rockford Wire Works Company and the Rockford Suspender Company; he was also interested in manufacturing a lubricating oil, and in a planing-mill. Mr. Spafford died December 5, 1897. His manner was ever gracious toward all sorts and conditions of men. Mrs. Spafford and one daughter, Miss Kate, survive. Two daughters are deceased.

Phineas Howes was a native of Putnam county, New York, and was born September 25, 1817. He came to Rockford in 1839, and in that year he erected a small house on East State street, which is still standing. Mr. Howes was a carpenter and joiner, and followed this trade for many years. He purchased



a tract of land in Cherry Valley township. For about fifteen years he was a partner with John Lake in the lumber trade. By strict attention to business, Mr. Howes accumulated quite a large estate. His death occurred October 11, 1894. Mrs. C. H. Woolsey is a daughter. Mrs. Howes was a sister of the late Harris Barnum. She died December 10, 1877.

William Worthington was born at Enfield, Connecticut, July 5, 1813. He came to Rockford in the spring of 1838. About 1840 he built a brick blacksmith's shop on the southwest corner of State and First streets, where the Crotty block now stands. This shop was eight or ten feet below the present grade. Later Mr. Worthington built a wagon shop on the same lot, about the same size, of wood, one story. This was the first wagon shop on the East side. There were then no other buildings on those corners. Mr. Worthington was the next blacksmith on the East side, after William Penfield, and was probably the fourth in the village. About 1842 Mr. Worthington formed a partnership with Hosea D. Searles, and opened a drug store. This was the founding of the business now carried on by Worthington & Slade. Mr. Searles had come from Connecticut the year before, and was familiarly known as "Doc." Mr. Worthington's children are: Miss Julia, William, Frank, and Charles. His death occurred April 11, 1886. Mr. Worthington's partner, "Doc." Searles, had a fund of humor and anecdotes with which he entertained his patrons. He possessed mechanical skill, which he utilized by making the first soda fountain in the village. It was made of wood, with a lever of the same material, about ten feet long. He also built a rotary steam engine, which he sold to the Mt. Morris seminary.

Laomi Peake, Sr., a native of Herkimer county, New York, emigrated from St. Thomas, Upper Canada, to Rockford, in September, 1839. He was one of the few pioneers who brought ready capital. He came with about five thousand dollars in money, which was a princely sum for that time. Mr. Peake was the first person who made a harness in Rockford, although a man preceded him who did repairing. Mr. Peake purchased the northeast corner lot on First and State streets, sixty-six feet front on First street, by one hundred and fifty-six feet on State street, for one hundred dollars, and erected a brick building twenty-two by thirty-five feet, with two stories and a basement, at a cost of fifteen hundred dollars. The corner of this lot is now occupied by the Manufacturers Bank. In 1852 he com-







### **SECOND COURT HOUSE**

Built in 1844, on the Court House Square



### **DANIEL S. HAIGHT'S RESIDENCE**

Built in 1837, on the northeast corner of State and Madison streets: now standing on the northeast corner of Second and Walnut streets. The first session of the circuit court was held in this house

pleted a second brick block on the same site, and finished a hall on the third floor, at a total expense of about eight thousand dollars. Peake's hall was the first public hall in Rockford. This block was destroyed by fire in November, 1857, and the side and rear walls were left standing. The corner store was occupied at the time by C. A. Huntington and Robert Barnes, as a book-store, at a rental of four hundred and fifty dollars per year. Elisha A. Kirk and Anthony Haines purchased the property in the autumn of 1858, for four thousand dollars, and rebuilt the block the following year. In 1841 Mr. Peake built the small brick house directly west of Mrs. Anthony Haines' residence, on the same lot, where seven of his twelve children were born. In 1856 he built the substantial stone house which is now the residence of Mrs. Haines. Mr. Peake died November 8, 1891, at the age of eighty-four years. He was the father of L. Peake, the harness-dealer on West State street. Mrs. Peake resides in East Rockford, and is eighty-three years of age.

William Hulin was a native of Salem, Massachusetts. He settled in Rockton township in 1837 or '38. August 5, 1839, he was chosen a justice of the peace, and from that time he was continually in the public service. He resigned from the office of clerk of the county court a few days before his death, which occurred December 10, 1869. Mr. Hulin was about sixty-one years of age. In the early forties he removed to Rockford. His home in this city was the residence of Dr. C. H. Richings, on North Main street. In 1855 he married the widow of Merrill E. Mack. Mr. Hulin was a high-minded gentleman, in whom those who knew him best placed perfect confidence. Mr. Hulin preserved files of early Rockford papers, which are now in the public library. He edited a work on school law, with forms, which was of value to teachers.

Daniel Barnum was a native of New York, born in 1778. In 1838 Mr. Barnum, with his wife and six children, came to Winnebago county, and purchased one hundred and sixty acres of land in Cherry Valley township. Mr. Barnum removed to Rockford and spent his last days in retirement. He died November 8, 1870, at the age of ninety-two years.

Harris Barnum, son of Daniel Barnum, was born in Danbury, Connecticut, September 8, 1819. He came with his father to Rockford in 1838. His early manhood was spent on his father's farm. In 1866 he engaged in the shoe business in Rockford with the late Daniel Miller, but soon sold his interest. From



1870 to 1874 he was associated with Duncan Ferguson, now of Denver, in the real estate and loan business. In 1874 Mr. Barnum was one of the organizers of the Forest City Insurance Company, of which he served as treasurer until incapacitated by illness. Mr. Barnum held the offices of alderman and supervisor. Mr. and Mrs. Barnum have had five children, three of whom are living: Mrs. Alta Williams, and Misses Blanche and Emily. Mr. Barnum was a man of excellent business ability and strict integrity. With these qualities he acquired a large estate. Mr. Barnum died February 26, 1899, in his eightieth year.

Hon. Horace Miller was a native of Berkshire county, Massachusetts, and was born in 1798. He came to this county in 1839, and settled on a large tract of land near the mouth of the Kishwaukee river, which in an early day was known as the Terrace farm. At one time he owned twelve hundred and fifty acres. From 1850 to 1852 Mr. Miller represented this county in the state legislature. He resided on his farm until about 1861, when he came to Rockford and lived a retired life until his death August 5, 1864. Mr. Miller was father of William H. Miller, a well known citizen. Mrs. Brown, widow of the late Judge Brown, is a daughter.

Mr. and Mrs. John Benjamin came from Canada in 1839, and settled in Guilford township. Mr. Benjamin's step-daughter, Mrs. Sarah A. Cook, who still resides in East Rockford, has the distinction of being the first matron of Rockford seminary. She served in this capacity from 1849 to 1852. The students were served with meals in a frame structure directly opposite the first seminary building, on the east side of North First street.

Among the other pioneers of 1838 were: Alfred P. Mather, William Hamilton, Levi Monroe, and Richard Marsh. In 1839 there came Courtland Mandeville, Frederick Charlie, Thaddeus Davis, Sr., Stephen Crilley, D. Bierer, Chester Hitchcock, John Bull, H. Hudson. Others who came previous to 1840 were: Sylvester Scott, James Gilbert, Artemas Hitchcock, John W. Dyer, Samuel C. Fuller, Newton Crawford, Jonathan Hitchcock, Dr. D. Goodrich, Hollis H. Holmes, Stephen Gilbert, and Bela Shaw. Judge Shaw died suddenly May 31, 1865. Five brothers, Thomas, William, John, Robert and Benjamin Garrett, with their parents, settled in Guilford township. Thomas died January 20, 1900. He was a Manxman, born on the Isle of Man, February 11, 1827.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### TRIALS OF THE PIONEERS.—SCARCITY OF PROVISIONS.

ONE of the greatest privations of the early settlers was the scarcity of provisions, which at that time were obtained from the older settlements in the southern portion of the state. The pioneers possessed limited means, and few were individually able to bear the expense of a journey of such distance. Several neighbors would unite their small sums, and send one of their number for supplies. The difficulties of travel were great; there were rivers to cross, either forded or swam; streams and sloughs to be waded; muddy roads and ponderous wagons. Under these circumstances, the time of the messenger's return was uncertain. Later, when a trade in provisions had been established, the same obstacles kept them at almost fabulous prices, and the settlers were sometimes reduced to the verge of absolute destitution. Flour sold from sixteen to twenty dollars per barrel, and on one occasion Thomas Lake purchased three barrels at twenty-two dollars each. Pork was thirty dollars per barrel; wheat sold from three to four dollars per bushel; New Orleans sugar twenty-five cents per pound; and other provisions in proportion. This condition rendered it impossible for the great majority of the settlers, with their scanty means, to scarcely procure the necessities for their support. For six weeks in the winter of 1837-38 there was a tobacco famine, which was a terrible privation to the slaves of the filthy weed. "Judge" E. S. Blackstone said the people in the early forties were too poor to cast a shadow. Mr. Thurston ventures the assertion that in 1841-42 there were not twenty farmers in the county who possessed a suit of clothes suitable to wear at church or at court, which they had purchased with the fruits of their labor on their farms. Some who had passed the prime of life became discouraged and returned to their homes in the east to die. Barter was practiced even in payment for performing the marriage ceremony. Abraham I. Enoch, a justice of the peace, once took a bushel of beans as his fee. Joel B. Potter, a clergyman, was compensated for two ceremonies in wheat, and one day's breaking. Ephraim Sumner swam Pecatonica river twice one cold night, to perform the rite, and received fifty cents.



Had it not been for a beneficent Providence, who stocked the woods and prairies with game and the rivers with fish, many would have suffered for the necessities of the barest subsistence. As late as 1841 the scarcity of fruit was a great trial. There was little, and often none, not even canned fruit. There were dried apples, and the housewives made "mince-pies" of them. Sometimes, in case of sickness, the ways and means looked rather dark, and the mother and her whole family might be involved. In such cases none filled a more important place than Miss Betsy Weldon, whom a few will remember. Strong and well herself, she could fill the place of nurse, housekeeper, dressmaker, milliner, and general repairer of clothing. She was ever ready to respond to cases of need.

The late Judge Church once told this story: "I have in my mind one who is now among the most prosperous farmers, who found himself without the means of procuring for his family a single meal, and he, with one of his neighbors similarly situated, determined to try their luck at fishing. They proceeded to Rock river, and met with success entirely beyond their expectations. When returning, each with as many fish as he could well carry, said one farmer: 'Well, we have got our fish, but what have we to fry them in?' 'Fry them in!' replied his hopeful and satisfied companion. 'Why, fry them in *water*!' And could you in those days have visited the log cabins scattered over these prairies, that are now groaning under the load of a bountiful harvest, and covered with all the evidences of comfort that wealth can purchase, you would have found many a man going to his hard day's toil from as scanty a breakfast as of suckers fried in water."

It is well that Winnebago county was settled by such a class of sturdy pioneers; men of will and purpose, who knew no such word as fail; who pushed out in advance of civilization, with the determination of the old Norse baron, who engraved upon his shield, as heraldic device, a pickax, surmounted by the motto, "Where there's no hole for me to pass, I'll make one."

It must be evident to the casual observer that only a small portion of the human family possess the qualifications for pioneers. It is not the business of the pioneer to seek good society; but to make it. Contrary to Mr. Carlyle's dictum, the society of that day was not founded upon cloth. The social status was based upon respectability. In the rural districts a family would sometimes drive twenty or twenty-five miles in a lumber



wagon, to visit a "neighbor." In the village amusements were extemporized to dispel the lonesomeness of the long winter evenings. Among the most popular was the "mock court." The sessions of the court were held in Mr. Miller's store, where "pent-up Uticas" of spread-eagle eloquence were allowed full expression. Each member of the court had his sobriquet; some of these were not suggested by the muses. Another popular summer amusement with a certain class was the "awkward squad," which performed frequent evolutions around Sam Little's saloon. They always produced a "smile."

The noble band of women displayed the fortitude of true heroines. They shared the toils, endured the privations, counseled in difficulties, encouraged in despondency, and nursed in sickness. At the first reunion of the Society of Early Settlers, held at the Holland House, February 2, 1871, Charles I. Horsman responded to the toast, "The Mothers and Daughters of the West, in which he paid them this tribute:

"I don't know why I have been selected to respond to this toast, only that the ladies and I have always been good friends, and I find them my best friends in prosperity and in adversity.

" 'Man works from sun to sun,  
Woman's work is never done.' "

"Mr. President, the truth of this old adage was literally verified in the early settlement of this county. It was the women that carried the laboring oar, and it was to their untiring industry by day and night that we, the men, mainly owe the measure of success we have achieved. It was her words of encouragement, and smiles of approbation that cheered us on in the darkest hour of trial. They were not the effeminate angels that Willis writes of, 'with lips like rose-leaves torn,' but sterling women that met the stern realities of life, and were equal to the occasion; . . . and, Mr. President, what would we poor fellows have done when burning up with fever, or chilled to death with the ague! But for the kind offices of wife and mother and sister to smooth our pillow, bathe our fevered brows, and moisten our parched lips, many of use here tonight in robust health would be lying under the clods of the valley. All honor, say I, Mr. President, to the mothers and daughters of the west, those who, with their enterprising fathers and husbands, left their own pleasant hills and valleys to tread upon the receding footsteps of the red man."

## CHAPTER XXVI.

ROCKFORD HOUSES IN 1838.—LATER BUILDINGS.—H. H. SILSBY.

IN April, 1838, there were only four houses north of State street, in West Rockford: the ferry house on the site of the public library building; Abiram Morgan's log house, on or very near the site of the Horsman residence; a log cabin on the bank of the river, about one hundred and thirty rods above State, occupied by Rev. John Morrill, and D. A. Spaulding, the government surveyor; a board and plank house near the site of A. D. Forbes' residence, occupied by John and Calvin Haskell, nephews of Dr. George Haskell. South of State street there were quite a number of cabins. Nathaniel Loomis and his son, Henry W. Loomis, lived in a log house near the southeast corner of State and Main streets; and much of the valuable property in this block still belongs to the Loomis estate. On the west side of Main, D. D. Alling had an unfinished house. Directly north was a two-story frame house, which remained unfinished for several years. On the same side, opposite the government building, still stands the residence of George W. Brinkerhoff. On the corner north of the Chicago & Northwestern depot, Nathaniel Wilder had a house of one and a half story. On the east side of Main, opposite the new depot, Wyman & Houghton had a story-and-a-half building used as a bakery and boarding house. South of the C., B. & Q. depot, on the west side of Main, James Mitchell had a small house. On the same side of the street, near the bank of the creek, stood Mr. Kent's house and sawmill. There was a log hut eight or ten rods below the mill that had been used as a blacksmith's shop, and a store near the river. William E. Dunbar had lived in a log cabin about one hundred yards south of the creek, and twelve to fifteen rods east of Main street. Sanford & Platt's store was on the river bank, south of State. Benjamin Kilburn had a frame house on the site of the Hotel Nelson. There was a total of eighteen buildings in the village on the west side of the river, beside the cabin built by Mr. Blake in the grove to the west.



The East side was somewhat larger. The Rockford House was for some time the only hotel between Belvidere and Freeport. On the southwest corner of State and Madison streets stood Bundy & Goodhue's store. Directly south was a building erected by Mr. Haight. The first floor was the postoffice, and the second was occupied by Tinker & Johnson as a tailor shop. On the northwest corner of Madison and Walnut was a ball alley owned by Charles Oliver. On the southeast corner of State and Madison was Potter & Preston's store. They succeeded Bundy & Goodhue on the opposite corner, where they remained until the death of Mr. Preston, when Mr. Potter continued the business alone for a time. East of Potter & Preston's first store was the foundation of the Washington House. On the northeast corner of State and Main was Daniel S. Haight's unfinished frame house. On East State street Mr. Haight was putting up a one-story building for a postoffice, which a few years later was occupied by Worthington & Searles as the second drug store in the village; this building is still standing near the Kenosha depot. East of the postoffice site, on the alley, was Mr. Haight's first log house, occupied by John Miller as a boarding house. East of the alley, on State, was Samuel Little's saloon. On North First street was a story-and-a-half house occupied by Samuel Corey, a brother-in-law of Mr. Haight. North of Mr. Haight's frame house was a story-and-a-half house owned by William Hamilton; and at the northeast corner of Madison and Market was William Penfield's blacksmith's shop. Between the "swell-front" and the brick house south on South Second street owned by Samuel I. Church, stood a house with a story and a half, owned by Dr. David Goodrich. In the rear of this, on the alley, was a log structure occupied as a schoolhouse about 1837-38. On the site of the streetcar barns on Kishwaukee street, was Anson Barnum's double log house. At the southeast corner of Second and Walnut was John Phelps' house, afterward owned by William P. Dennis. On the west side of First street, opposite the fire station, was John C. Kemble's house; and on the river bank, north of Walnut, James Clark was building a store, in which he kept a general stock. The "stage barn" built for Mr. Haight in 1836 by Thomas Lake and Sidney Twogood, stood near the intersection of State and Third streets. John Vance's log structure, built for a store, was on South First street, opposite the hay market. There was a log house about ten rods southeast of the "stage barn,"



occupied by a Mr. Kingsley, who came from Belvidere to work for Mr. Haight on the Rockford House. James Boswell's cabin was near the Peacock estate. Jacob Posson's cabin was in the vicinity of block twenty-one, Gregory & Penfield's Addition. These, with the East side ferry house, and a small log hut used for a stable, were all the buildings within half a mile of the intersection of State and Madison streets, on the east side of the river, in April, 1838. Mr. Haight erected at least seven buildings on the East side, beside three barns, and one-half of the Rockford House. In 1839-40 he build the large two-story brick house east of Longwood street, which is still standing. Mr. Haight claimed that one hundred thousand brick were used in its construction.

In the spring and summer of 1838 Harvey H. Silsby, Mowry Brown, William Hull and William Harvey built the house now standing north of Mrs. W. A. Dickerman's residence, for Dr. Haskell, who afterward sold it to John Edwards. In the autumn was erected by Dr. Haskell the brick building which was known later as the Winnebago House, on Andrew Ashton's corner. When laying out the ground for the cellar Mr. Silsby persuaded Dr. Haskell to set his building six feet from the line of the street. The Winnebago House was the first brick store built above Rock Island on Rock river. Into this store Dr. Haskell moved the stock of goods from the building on the river bank which had been occupied by Platt & Sanford; and he and Isaiah Lyon continued the business. In 1843 Mr. Lyon closed out the stock, and converted the building into a hotel, under the name of the Winnebago House. Mr. Lyon's successors as proprietor were N. Crawford, C. C. Cobern, P. C. Watson, James B. Pierce, Isaac N. Cunningham, and D. Sholts. The building passed into Mr. Seaton's hands in 1854, and was afterward rearranged into stores.

After finishing Dr. Haskell's brick block, Mr. Silsby and Mowry Brown built a house for G. A. Sanford near the center of the block, south of Porter's drug store, on Main street. This house is now standing near the Chestnut street bridge. Benjamin Kilburn built his house near the Trask bridge road that season. The rear of the Beattie house was built the same summer.

In September, 1839, Mr. Silsby and Phineas Howes entered into a contract to build a trestle bridge over the Kishwaukee

river at Newburg, once called Sayresville, after its founder, Colonel Sayres. Newburg was then in Winnebago county, on the mile-strip. The bridge was built of heavy timbers framed together, and floor timbers laid from one bent to another to support the floor. This bridge extended several hundred feet south of the river across a marsh to solid ground. Thirty-two years later Mr. Silsby crossed this bridge with a loaded wagon.

Mr. Silsby rendered great service to the writer in locating these buildings of the early days. His trade, that of contractor and builder, doubtless fixed the dates of their erection in his mind. No other individual furnished a more valuable fund of information in the preparation of this work. He knew the village from the beginning, and he retained his excellent memory unimpaired to the last. Mr. Silsby died suddenly April 7, 1899, in Kansas, after having spent the winter with his daughter in Rockford. He was eighty-one years of age. Mr. Silsby was born in Acworth, Sullivan county, New Hampshire, November 1, 1817. He went in 1837 to Upper Alton, where he remained until he came to Rockford the following year. After working at his trade for some years, he embarked in mercantile business. Mr. Silsby was survived by three daughters, two of whom reside in Rockford. They are Mrs. Harriet Griswold and Mrs. Levi Sanders. George A. Silsby, of Mitchell, South Dakota, formerly in the shoe business in Rockford, is a son.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH.—JACOB KNAPP.—DR. THOMAS KERR.

THE oldest Baptist organization west of Chicago is the First Baptist church of Belvidere. On a Sunday in March, 1836, Rev. John S. King preached the first sermon in the Kishwaukee country, at the primitive home of Timothy Caswell. The First Baptist church was founded in July, 1836, and was the first religious organization in Belvidere. Its first pastor was Prof. Seth S. Whitman, who served ten years. Prof. Whitman was a native of Shaftsbury, Vermont. He was graduated from Madison university; and later, in 1827, he was one of the three who formed the first graduating class from Newton Theological institution. Immediately after his graduation, he was called to the chair of Biblical interpretation at Hamilton Theological institution. This chair he occupied seven years, until his health failed, when he came to Belvidere. Prof. Whitman also performed duty as a civil officer in that early day. In 1841 he was clerk of the circuit court under the appointment of Judge Dan. Stone, and postmaster of the village. Belvidere, in 1836, was included in this county; hence a reference to the church in that village has a place in this chapter.

The First Baptist church of Rockford was organized December 22, 1838, at the home of Dr. Haskell. It is thus the second Baptist church planted in northern Illinois, and the third religious organization in Rockford. Prof. Whitman and Deacon Nathaniel Crosby from Belvidere were present. Prof. Whitman was chosen moderator, and Dr. Haskell, clerk. A declaration of twelve articles of faith and a church covenant were adopted. Sixteen residents of Rockford presented church letters, as follows: James and Martha Jackson, from Indianopolis, Indiana; Abiram Morgan, from the First Baptist church, Springfield, Massachusetts; Pierce and Evelina Wood, from Conneaut, Ohio; John and Susan Emerson, Machias Point, Maine; William B. Brainard, Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Ransom and Lucy Knapp, George and Eunice P. Haskell, Mowry and Lucy Brown, Isaiah Lyon, and Caleb Blood, from Upper Alton.



In June, 1888, the church celebrated its semi-centennial. The Rock River Association had been invited to hold its regular session in Rockford. It was proposed to celebrate this anniversary at the time the Association should meet, although the exact date of organization was later in the year. The Association accepted the invitation. At that time the pastor, Rev. W. A. Stanton, Ph. D., prepared an excellent historical address, to which the writer is indebted for many of the facts given in this chapter.

Just one-half of the constituent membership of the church came from Upper Alton. This enrollment included several men of sturdy character and progressive ideas. Dr. Haskell has already been introduced to the reader. Isaiah Lyon honored every position to which he was called. Mr. Lyon was born in Woodstock, Connecticut, in February, 1804. He was a cousin of General Nathaniel Lyon, who was killed at the battle near Wilson's creek, in 1861. About 1825 Mr. Lyon went to St. Louis, thence to Upper Alton, and from there he came to Rockford. He was in mercantile business, proprietor of the Winnebago House, and for thirty-one consecutive years a justice of the peace. He resigned on account of declining health, after he was seventy years of age. Mr. Lyon's sterling qualities inspired confidence, and the poor always found in him an adviser and helper. He was prosperous in business, and acquired a considerable estate. Mr. Lyon died January 22, 1883. His only child is Mrs. S. F. Weyburn, who is now residing in Scranton, Pennsylvania. Abiram Morgan was one of the most prominent citizens of early Rockford, and maintained his membership with the church until his death, January 6, 1855. Ransom Knapp was a brother of Rev. Jacob Knapp, the revivalist. Caleb Blood had been a student at Shurtleff college, and became a Baptist clergyman. He was a grandson of Rev. Caleb Blood, whose ministry in New England from 1777 to 1814 was well known.

January 12, 1839, three weeks after its organization, the church extended a call to Rev. A. Chapin, of Shurtleff college, at a salary of three hundred dollars a year. He declined the call, and until May, 1841, the church depended upon occasional supplies. Among these were Prof. Whitman, of Belvidere, and Rev. John Sears. Dr. Haskell was deacon and clerk, and withal a pillar of strength. He had built a brick block on the site of Hon. Andrew Ashton's store, with a hall on the second floor for public meetings; and here the church held its services until

May, 1841. The missionary spirit was fostered. There is a record of a vote, March 9, 1839, to give twenty-five dollars to the Illinois Baptist convention.

In December, 1839, the church was legally incorporated, and plans for a house of worship were considered. In the following spring, lot six in block eleven was purchased. This is the northwest corner of Main and Peach streets, and is now owned by the W. A. Knowlton estate. The church had enjoyed no preaching for three months, and in April, 1840, it was decided to have regular services, with or without preaching. A system of benevolence, to begin June 1, was adopted. In July following a call was extended to S. C. Jameson, a student at Brown university; but it was declined.

September 23, 1840, the Rock River Baptist Association was organized at Belvidere. During 1839-40 churches had been organized at Round Prairie, Roscoe, Pecatonica, and Sugar River. The Rockford church appointed six delegates to attend the Association. Dr. Haskell was chosen moderator, and Prof. Whitman, clerk. The total membership of the six churches of the Association was two hundred and nineteen. The minutes of this first Association were published in full in eight small pages. A copy is preserved in the Rockford public library, and is probably the only one in existence. A complete file of the minutes of the Rock River Baptist Association for fifty-nine years has been preserved in this library. The early numbers were collected by Rev. E. C. Mitchell, D. D., while he was pastor of the State Street Baptist church.

The erection of the new house of worship proceeded as rapidly as possible. This sanctuary stood close to Main street, and faced the east. It was a balloon frame, about thirty by forty feet, clapboarded, with no cupola. There were three windows on either side, but none in front or rear. Three or four steps at the front led to a porch, the covering of which was an extension of the gable end of the roof. This projecting roof was supported by four square columns. The interior consisted of a single room. From the door there was one center aisle, and on either side a row of pews which extended to the side walls. At the right and left were seats, slightly raised, for the singers. At the west end was the pulpit, upon a platform securely boxed.

The first sermon preached in this church was on May 9, 1841. It was not then completed, and temporary seats were



used. Prof. Whitman was the preacher, and from that time until November 12th of the same year, he regularly supplied the pulpit, at five dollars a Sunday. As a stated supply, Prof. Whitman may be considered in a restricted sense as the first pastor.

The Rock River Baptist Association held its second annual session with the Rockford church September 18 and 19, 1841. The delegates at Belvidere the preceding year had been instructed to invite the Association to meet in Rockford at this time, and the invitation had been accepted. The introductory sermon was preached by Rev. Luther W. Lawrence, of Bonus. The total membership of the churches in the Association had increased since the first session from two hundred and nineteen to two hundred and sixty.

The first resident pastor was the Rev. Solomon Knapp. He came from Des Plaines, Illinois, November 12, 1841, served less than a year, and resigned September 19, 1842. His salary was at the rate of three hundred dollars a year. During his pastorate there were nine additions by baptism and eight by letter. From his departure until the autumn of 1843 the church was without a pastor.

A call was then extended to Rev. Warren F. Parrish, of Massillon, Ohio. He was a convert from Mormonism to the Baptist faith; and it is said the threats made by the Mormons greatly annoyed him and his wife. The church paid him a salary of three hundred dollars and house-rent the first year; the second year he received four hundred dollars. Of this amount, the Home Missionary Society paid one hundred dollars. This is the only year, in the entire history of the church, when it received any assistance from this source. The First Baptist society of Rockford was organized January 6, 1845. During the summer of that year there was a lack of harmony between the pastor and people, and September 1st Rev. Parrish tendered his resignation. He continued his residence in Rockford, and his membership with the church until June 15, 1860, when he was excluded. He had preferred charges against Dr. Clark, who was then pastor, for preaching heresy as to the Biblical teaching about usury. The church exonerated Dr. Clark, and rebuked Rev. Parrish. He continued to agitate the matter, however, until he was excluded. Upon his confession of error, he was restored January 4, 1862. In 1866 he removed to Kansas, where he became insane, and died.



About a month after the resignation of Rev. Parrish, the church invited Rev. O. H. Read, of Portageville, New York, to supply six months, from October 13, 1845. The terms were: "one hundred dollars in money, a cook stove, delf, and furniture with which to keep house; but he was to pay his own house rent." Rev. Read was unwilling to remain longer than the six months.

Rev. Luther Stone came from Rock Island and served as pastor from June, 1846, to June, 1847, with a salary of four hundred dollars. In October, 1846, the church granted letters to eight members, to form a church at Harlem. Deacon R. T. Mabie was one of the number. After a struggle of two years the Harlem church disbanded, and Deacon Mabie reunited with the church November 18, 1848.

From July 18, 1847, to October, 1848, the church was again favored with Prof. Whitman as a stated supply. His health failed, and he retired for three years from pastoral duties. He then took charge of a Baptist church at Madison, Wisconsin, where he died after eight months of service, January 2, 1852. The Baptists of northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin owe a great debt to this cultured Christian gentleman. Dr. Frank S. Whitman, a prominent physician and politician of Belvidere, is a nephew.

In the autumn of 1848, Elder Jacob Knapp removed from the east, and November 18th he united with the First church by letter. The church was then without a pastor, and arrangements were soon made with Elder Knapp for holding revival meetings. The little frame building was too small, and the church secured the use of the court house, where it continued to hold services until the new stone structure was completed. Elder Knapp continued his labors until June, 1849. At the annual session of the Rock River Association, held that month, the church reported sixty-two additions by baptism and seventeen by letter. These accessions increased the membership to one hundred and sixty.

Elder Knapp was one of the most remarkable men of his time. He was born in Otsego county, New York, December 7, 1799. He was graduated at Hamilton Theological seminary in June, 1825, and ordained in the following August at Springfield, New York. After serving the church at Springfield for five years, and the church at Watertown for three years, he began his career as an evangelist. For fifteen years his home was at Hamilton, New York, and for twenty-five years at Rockford.

Elder Knapp claimed to have preached about sixteen thousand sermons, baptized four thousand candidates, and was the means of making one hundred thousand converts by his revival ministry, of whom two hundred became ministers of the gospel. Elder Knapp's mind was characterized by strong logical tendencies, and his sermons abounded in homely illustrations, apt quotations from the Bible, and a good knowledge of human nature. The sight of a Unitarian or Universalist had much the same influence upon him that red flannel has upon a certain domestic animal. In commenting upon the cold intellectuality which was supposed to distinguish the Unitarians, Elder Knapp said that when they went to hell, they would so change the atmosphere of the place that all the little devils could skate on the ice. In stature, Elder Knapp was short, squarely and stoutly built, his voice was deeply sepulchral, and his manner self-possessed. He was fertile in expedients and possessed an indomitable will. He was quick at repartee, in which he was a consummate master. An instance is recalled when he was interrupted in a sermon by a smart young man in the gallery who inquired as to who was the father of the devil. Quick as a flash came the retort from the evangelist: "Young man, keep your own family record." On one occasion Elder Knapp met two clergymen on the street, when one said to the other, so that the Elder could hear: "Have you heard the news—they say the devil is dead." Elder Knapp reached out both arms, placed one hand upon each minister in fatherly compassion, and exclaimed: "Poor, fatherless children!" He sometimes drew comparisons which were not complimentary to his own denomination. He charged certain members with inconsistency in their doctrine of never falling from grace and their practice of continually so doing; whereas the Methodists believed in falling from grace, and lived up to it.

To this day the widest differences of opinion prevail as to the sincerity and true Christian character of Elder Knapp. Many of his fellow citizens believed his daily life was quite inconsistent with the higher ideals which he taught from the pulpit; while others considered him the very incarnation of godly zeal; as a veritable John the Baptist, warning the people in terms of awful grandeur to flee from the wrath to come. President Knott, of Union college, testified: "Elder Knapp is unequaled among uninspired men." Dr. Thomas Armitage, in his *History of the Baptists*, says: "The writer heard him preach many



times, and judged him, as he is apt to judge men, more by his prayers than his sermons, for he was a man of much prayer. His appearance in the pulpit was very striking, his face pale, his skin dark, his mouth wide, with a singular cast in one eye bordering on a squint; he was full of native wit, almost gestureless, and vehement in denunciation, yet so cool in his deliberation that with the greatest ease he gave every trying circumstance its appropriate but unexpected turn." Elder Knapp died March 3, 1874, on his farm north of Rockford, and was buried in the West side cemetery, with his feet toward the west, in accordance with his strange request. Miss Kittie Sherwood, his granddaughter, has been laboring for many years as a home missionary among the colored people in the south. Elder Knapp's Autobiography was published in 1868.

The immediate successor of Elder Knapp was Rev. Ichabod Clark, D. D. He came from Galena, Illinois, in July, 1849, and labored continuously for five years. Mrs. Clark died September 16, 1854. Dr. Clark desired a change of scene and labor, and November 5th of that year he left Rockford to engage for a time as superintendent of missions for the Illinois Baptist General Association. During his absence the pulpit was regularly supplied by Rev. Justin A. Smith, D. D., the veteran editor of the *Standard*, the Baptist publication in Chicago. In August, 1855, Dr. Clark resumed the active pastorate, which he retained until July, 1860. This was the longest pastorate in the history of the church. Four hundred and fifty-two members were added to the enrollment, of whom two hundred and eleven were by baptism.

The stone edifice now occupied by the church was completed in 1850, and was then the finest church building in the village. The dedicatory sermon was preached June 20th, by Rev. Jirah D. Cole, before the Rock River Baptist Association, which was then in session with the church. The building cost six thousand dollars; the total cost of the lots, building and furniture was seven thousand five hundred and eleven dollars and seventeen cents. Among the prominent pew-holders were William Hulin, Charles I. Horsman, J. B. Howell, H. W. Loomis, Daniel Dow, Isaac Andrus and John Beattie. Not all the pew-holders were members of the church, and a few were not even included in the congregation. This church is the oldest house of worship in the city. Its solid walls have resisted the tooth of time and the fury of the elements for a full half century. When the old frame



church was vacated, it entered upon a career of itineracy. It was sold to the Unitarians, who removed it to their lot. Still later it was used by another church, and for secular business before it was torn down.

Revival services were frequently held from 1850 until Rev. Clark's resignation. In 1858 there were one hundred and two baptisms. June 6th of that year fifty-eight received the right hand of fellowship. This year the church reached its high-water mark. After fifteen years of long and faithful service, Dr. and Mrs. Haskell adopted Spiritualism, and severed their connection with the church in 1853 and '54, respectively.

July 31, 1858, letters were granted to thirty-four members who wished to organize another church in East Rockford. The New Hampshire confession of faith was adopted by the First church January 2, 1859. When Dr. Clark closed his pastorate in 1860, the church had a membership of two hundred and seventy-seven. When he came to Rockford there were one hundred and sixty Baptists in the town; when he went away there were three hundred and fifty-seven. Dr. Clark died at Lockport, Illinois, in 1869, and was buried in the West side cemetery.

Several members of the church were licensed to preach. Among these was Rev. Samuel Haskell, a nephew of Dr. Haskell, to whom reference was made in Chapter XXIII. Mr. Haskell went from Rockford to Suffield, Connecticut, where he prepared for college. In 1845 he was graduated from Brown university, and in 1847, from Hamilton Theological institution. From 1847 to 1852 he was pastor of the First church in Detroit, Michigan; from 1852 to 1871 in Kalamazoo, and from 1871 to 1888 in Ann Arbor. In 1866 he was president of the Michigan State Convention. He is now retired from the pastorate, and lives in Ypsilanti, Michigan. Other licentiates were T. Adna Orcott, J. P. Curry, T. L. Breckenridge, J. A. Dobson, Volney Powell, and George Bornschlegel.

Early clerks of the church were: George Haskell, M. D., December 2, 1838, to November, 1844; Duncan Ferguson, November 2, 1844, to June, 1846; Volney Powell, June, 1846, to June, 1847; Duncan Ferguson, June, 1847, to March, 1848; Volney Powell, March, 1848, to October, 1853; Giles Mabie, December, 1853, to April, 1855; Henry Sears, October, 1855, to July, 1857; O. A. Goodhue, July, 1857, to September, 1858; S. P. Crawford, September, 1858, to October, 1862; W. G.

Ferguson, October, 1862, to July, 1865; Ahaz Paxson, July, 1865, to November, 1866.

Dr. Clark was succeeded by Dr. Thomas Kerr, who received a call immediately after the resignation of his predecessor. Dr. Kerr was born in Aberdeen, Scotland, May 24, 1824. He received a liberal education at Gordon's college and the University of Aberdeen. The latter is one of the oldest of two or three universities in Scotland. Dr. Kerr has a brother who for forty years was professor of architecture at King's college in London, and is now professor emeritus. Dr. Kerr came to America in 1844. He arrived in New York September 1st. While in that city he attended a winter's course of scientific lectures in Columbia college. In 1850 Dr. Kerr received his degree in medicine at the Iowa state university, then located at Davenport, but now at Des Moines. The same year the Doctor began the practice of medicine at Elgin, Illinois, where he remained seven years. During the latter part of this period Dr. Kerr felt constrained to enter the ministry; and in June, 1857, he was ordained as a Baptist clergyman at Elgin, by the Fox River Association. Among those who officiated at his ordination was Rev. Charles Hill Roe, of Belvidere, an honored name in local Baptist history. Dr. Kerr became pastor of the Baptist church at Dundee, in Kane county, in the latter part of 1857. During this pastorate he continued to practice medicine at Elgin, as he found he could not absolutely retire at once from his former profession. In the autumn of 1859 Dr. Kerr was called to Waukegan; and June 1, 1860, he began his pastorate in Rockford.

To Dr. Kerr belongs the honor of preaching the first war sermon in Rockford after the bombardment of Fort Sumter. Sunday morning the news came that President Lincoln had issued a call for seventy-five thousand men. It was one of those critical moments in the nation's life. Under its solemn inspiration, Dr. Kerr preached an impressive patriotic discourse in the afternoon in the First church, and for the first time in local history the American flag was displayed from the pulpit. Dr. Kerr preached the first funeral discourse over a dead soldier, a brother of Lucius Day, whose remains had been returned to Rockford for burial. These memorial services were held in the street in front of the old court house.

After one year's service, Dr. Kerr was given a vacation of three months, during which time he visited Palestine. In 1864 Dr. Kerr was a member of the Christian Commission for three



weeks, under the appointment of its chairman, George H. Stuart. His commission was signed as secretary by B. F. Jacobs, the famous Sunday-school worker. Upon his return Dr. Kerr raised several hundred dollars, by popular lectures on his observations at the front, for the benefit of the Christian Commission fund. Dr. Kerr's official reports were highly complimented by Chairman Stuart. These appointments of clergymen were always for a short time, in order that a large number might be invited to serve, and because such appointees were usually in charge of their own local fields.

Dr. Kerr's first Rockford pastorate closed November 1, 1866, when he was called to Hannibal, Missouri. After a brief pastorate by Rev. James Lick, D. D., Dr. Kerr was again called to his old charge in Rockford, and he began his second pastorate July 11, 1869. His discourses were not considered evangelical, and he was charged with not preaching Baptist doctrines. Dr. Kerr tendered his resignation August 28, 1870. In October the church called a council. This council met on the 14th, deposed Dr. Kerr from the Baptist ministry, and advised the church to exclude him from membership. Upon this advice, Dr. Kerr and forty-eight members were excluded, who, though owning the larger part of its property, left the church undisturbed in its title to, and possession of it. With his friends, Dr. Kerr organized the Church of the Christian Union, upon a basis of liberal religious thought. It is now the oldest independent church of its kind in the country; and preceded by five years a similar movement led by the late Prof. David Swing, in Chicago. Dr. Kerr, with a slight intermission, has preached in Rockford nearly forty years. American church history records comparatively few parallels of such long service in one community. The career of Dr. Kerr after his radical departure and of his church belongs to a later period of local history.

Dr. Kerr is a commanding figure and a strong personality. His presentations of religious thought, though not expressed in evangelical terms, are inspirational, restful and spiritual; and enkindle a spirit of reverence in responsive hearts. The question as to whether essential Christianity can be permanently maintained in the hearts of men, apart from the historic and personal Christ, is the fundamental point at issue between evangelical and liberal Christianity; and upon this question the latter is on trial for its life.



## CHAPTER XXVIII.

VILLAGE INCORPORATED.—LAND SALE.—FIRST TEMPERANCE CLUB.

EARLY in 1839 the little village aspired to the dignity of an incorporated town. The general law of 1831 provided that “whenever the white males over the age of twenty-one years, being residents of any town in this state, containing not less than one hundred and fifty inhabitants, shall wish to become incorporated for the better regulation of their internal police,” it should be lawful for them to do so. The ambition of the village was sustained by the required population.

A meeting of the citizens of Rockford was held, pursuant to public notice, at the Rockford House, April 1, 1839. David Goodrich was called to the chair, and James Mitchell was chosen clerk. It was resolved that the two villages of Rockford, east and west sides of Rock river, be incorporated into one town. Committees were appointed to ascertain the number of inhabitants within the prescribed boundaries of Rockford; to draft an act of incorporation for the town; and to confer with Mr. Brinckerhoff concerning free ferriage for the citizens of the county.

An adjourned meeting was held April 3d, but no business was transacted. A second adjourned meeting was held on the following evening. The committee on census reported that the number of inhabitants was two hundred and thirty-five. The committee appointed to confer with Mr. Brinckerhoff made a report to the effect that he would furnish free ferriage to the citizens of the county on condition that the trustees of the town would remunerate him, at the close of each year, with such sum as a committee of three should determine, after ascertaining the receipts and expenses of the ferriage. One member of the committee was to be chosen by the trustees, another by Mr. Brinckerhoff, and these two were to appoint a third. At this meeting, by a two-thirds vote, as required by law, the town was incorporated. An election for five trustees was held April 10th. There were chosen Dr. Goodhue, Daniel S. Haight, Samuel Little, Ephraim Wyman and Isaiah Lyon.

The statute provided that the boundaries of a town incorporated under its provisions should not exceed one mile square. The trustees restricted the limits as thus prescribed by the law. They organized by the election of Daniel S. Haight, president; Anson Barnum, clerk; John C. Kemble, attorney. Isaiah Lyon was elected collector and treasurer; Henry Thurston, assessor for the first district; John Haskell, for the second; Nathaniel Wilder for the third; S. D. Preston, for the fourth.

Rockford continued its simple municipal life under this system until January, 1852. These years were quite uneventful, so far as municipal affairs were concerned. The complete records of the proceedings of the board of trustees for those twelve years are contained in a single small volume. This book is well preserved, in the office of the city clerk. Routine business occupied the almost exclusive attention of the board; and frequently less than a page is required to record its proceedings.

The lands in Winnebago county did not come into market until the autumn of 1839. The lands in Rockford and Rockton townships were not offered for sale until 1843, by reason of the famous "Polish claims," which will be considered in detail in a subsequent chapter. The land office for this district in 1839 was at Galena. The opening of the lands to sale and entry in that year was an interesting event to the settlers of Winnebago county. Some of them had their farms well under cultivation, and had raised a sufficient surplus, so that they were able to secure their farms when the sale began. The uniform government price for land was ten shillings an acre. Speculators were always around the land office on days of sale, waiting for the first chance to make a claim. A common interest bound the settlers together, and they usually maintained their rights in equity against the sharp practices of the land sharks.

Many of the settlers, however, did not possess ready money. Stock and grain had become plenty by this time, but they could not be sold for cash. Money at one time commanded thirty per cent. Some of the farmers had their claims bid in on shares. Lands were also bid in by men who had money, on condition that their advances should double in three years—thirty-three and one-third per cent. interest; the money-loaner furnished the money, and gave a bond to the claimant to redeem at the expiration of three years, if the money should be paid on or before that day. The money-loaner supposed his

title was good, as it was entered in his own name, and paid for in full with his money. It was decided otherwise, however, by the supreme court, which treated it as a mortgage. There was much litigation on this point.

The Aberdeen Bank of Scotland purchased large tracts of land in 1839, in McHenry, Winnebago and Boone counties. There were purchased four thousand six hundred and forty acres in Boone county alone. Mr. Taylor, the agent of the bank, a short time after he made the entry, went down the Mississippi river on the steamboat "War Eagle," and when near St. Louis, he was drowned by falling from the boat. It has been said he leaped into the river; but there is no known reason to justify a suspicion of suicide.

Reference was made in a preceding chapter to the organization of a temperance society, July 4, 1837. H. B. Potter was chosen president, and M. W. Allen, secretary. The first annual meeting was held July 4, 1838, at Winnebago. Rev. Hiram Foote delivered an address. E. H. Potter was chosen president, and Horace Foote, secretary. The second annual meeting was held in West Rockford, July 4, 1839. Prayer was offered by Rev. John Morrill, and an address was given by Rev. Cyrus L. Watson. The pledge was circulated and sixty-one names were secured, which made the total membership one hundred and sixty-eight. Among the members during the first three years were H. B. Potter, Germanicus Kent, Samuel Haskell, Israel Morrill, I. P. Bartlett, Samuel Gregory, I. M. Johnson, George Haskell, John Emerson, James M. Wight, Dr. J. C. Goodhue.

February 22, 1840, it was resolved: "That this society has learned with concern, and deep regret, that several distilleries are about being erected in this and the neighboring counties, by means of which we are led to fear and believe a large proportion of our surplus produce is to be rendered worse than useless; that the kindest gifts of Providence will by this means be transformed into the worst of evils."

The records of this first temperance society are preserved in good condition, in possession of Mrs. Harriott Wight Sherratt. The last entry was made in April, 1842, by James M. Wight, secretary.



## CHAPTER XXIX.

### ROCKFORD CEMETERIES.

FOUR sites have been used in West Rockford for the purpose of a cemetery. The first burial in the village of Rockford was that of Henry Harmon, who was drowned at the ferry in Rock river April 7, 1837, on block thirty-five of J. W. Leavitt's plat of the original town of West Rockford. The Commercial Hotel, South Church street, is on the southeast corner of this block. The second interment was of the body of Sarah Kent, a daughter of Germanicus Kent, upon the same block, in 1837. These were followed by the burials of Addison Phillips, who accidentally shot himself in March, 1839, and John Haskell, a brother of Dr. George Haskell, also in that year. Mrs. James Mitchell and some others were buried upon block thirty-five, which was the only place of interment on the west side of the river until about 1840. The proprietors of that portion of the town west of the section line dividing sections twenty-two and twenty-three, then gave to the citizens of West Rockford a plat of ground for cemetery purposes corresponding to block fifty-three in Morgan and Horsman's Addition to the city of Rockford, on the south side of State street. This block now includes the estate of Dr. C. H. Richings. Mrs. Montague, wife of Richard Montague, was the first person buried in this ground. She died February 17, 1842. From that time this plat of ground continued to be the place of burial until 1844. The original proprietors of the town, by an agreement with the citizens, exchanged this place of burial for a site corresponding to what would have been blocks thirty-seven and forty-eight of the original plat, on the north bank of Kent's creek. This tract corresponds with the switch-yards, roundhouse and stock-yards of the Chicago & Northwestern railroad. The bodies were removed from the cemetery near State street and reburied in the new grounds. In the year 1844 the citizens, after several meetings, organized an association, and in February, 1845, they obtained a charter incorporating the Rockford Cemetery Association. Under this charter they elected their trustees and

other officers, and kept up the organization in accordance with all the provisions of the act. The first trustees named in this charter were John W. Taylor, Ephraim Wyman, Cyrus F. Miller, Richard Montague and Benjamin Kilburn.

From 1844 to 1852 this site remained the place of burial for the Rockford Cemetery Association. During this time the number of graves had increased to about one hundred and seventy-five. The bodies that had been buried on block thirty-five remained there until 1852.

The extension of the Galena & Chicago Union railroad to West Rockford again made it necessary for the Association to remove its cemetery, as the grounds had been selected by the railroad company as the site for its depot. A portion of this tract was condemned by the company for this purpose. The Association thereupon made arrangements with the railroad company for the sale of the entire property, except seventy feet fronting on Cedar street. The company paid the Association one thousand and nine hundred dollars. The frontage of seventy feet on Cedar street was subdivided into twelve lots, and sold to different persons for three thousand eight hundred and twelve dollars and twelve cents.

In April, 1852, the trustees took measures to procure a new charter for their more extended needs. In the following May the Association purchased of Charles Reed, George Haskell and Nathaniel Wilder, the present cemetery grounds. This tract contained thirty-three acres, for which the Association paid twelve hundred dollars. On the 29th of May, 1852, the Association made a contract with David D. Alling to remove all the bodies in the original place of burial on block thirty-five, and those in the later cemetery.

At the special session of the legislature in June, 1852, the Association obtained a new act of incorporation. The sum realized from the sale of its former property left a good margin after the later purchase. Quite extensive improvements were made with a portion of this reserve. This cemetery is a beautiful spot in summer, well kept, and contains many splendid monuments. One of the most noticeable is the plain granite shaft over the grave of Hon. Ephraim Sumner. The granite was quarried at Barre, Vermont. The height of the base and shaft is forty feet, and the weight is twenty tons. This monument was put up in 1894.

At an early date Daniel S. Haight appropriated an acre of

ground for a cemetery on the East side. It was situated on the east side of Longwood street, about ten rods north of State. The ground was open prairie. There was no shade from the summer sun, and the wintry winds intensified its desolation.

An act approved February 18, 1847, provided for the incorporation of the Cedar Bluff Cemetery Association. E. H. Potter, Willard Wheeler, Bela Shaw, Selden M. Church, Hollis H. Holmes and Lucius Clark and their successors were made a body politic and corporate for this purpose. The Association was not fully organized, however, until November 28, 1851. Twelve acres in section twenty-three were purchased from Bela Shaw, for four hundred dollars, subject to the dower of Rebecca Shaw. The tract was surveyed by Duncan Ferguson, April 3, 1853. It remained the only burying-ground on the East side until the organization of the Scandinavian Cemetery Association.

Love that survives the tomb has been called the purest attribute of the soul. This love finds an expression in the monuments erected over the graves of the dead. Moreover, the cemeteries of a people are in a measure an index of their religious hope. The funerals of today have less of the gruesomeness that characterized such occasions thirty years ago. Likewise, our cemeteries have been made more beautiful by the cultivation of the artistic sense, and by a deeper realization of the truth that death is but the doorway to a "freer air and a broader view," and an infinite expansion of sanctified power. The cemeteries of Rockford are worthy of the character of its people.



## CHAPTER XXX.

### THE SEVEN YEARS' WAR OVER THE SITE OF THE COUNTY SEAT.

THE attempt in 1836 to locate the county seat had proven a failure. The county business had been transacted in the meantime in various places in the village. The proprietors of Winnebago did not consider the refusal of their deed of cession to the county, noted in Chapter XII., as a finality. On that very day began the famous controversy over the location of the county seat, which was continued for seven years with great spirit, and not a little bitterness on all sides. The proprietors of Winnebago had expended considerable money in their town plat, and they were anxious to have the county buildings commenced at once, and thus settle the question. A favorable decision would insure increased value and ready sales of their town lots. On the other hand, the county commissioners opposed the site of Winnebago, and placed every obstacle in the way of such location. Various propositions were made by the proprietors during this and the succeeding year to induce the commissioners to take some action that would secure them in the location that had been previously made. All these overtures were either refused or evaded. The persistent refusal of the county commissioners led to state legislation.

By an act of the general assembly, approved March 2, 1839, the question was submitted to a popular vote. It was made the duty of the clerk of the county commissioners' court to give notice of an election to be held on the first Monday in May, 1839. The law provided that if it should appear that within one hundred of a majority of all the votes cast were in favor of the town of Winnebago, that town should remain the permanent county seat. But if any other place, after the first election, should receive a majority of all the votes given, such place should be the seat of justice. If more than two places received votes, and no one place received a majority, there should be an election held on the first Monday of each succeeding month, dropping off at each election, the place receiving the smallest number of votes, until some one place should receive a majority of all the votes polled.

These provisions gave Winnebago a decided advantage; but even then the town was unable to win the prize. At the election six aspirants received votes, as follows: Rockford, three hundred and twenty; Winnebago, seventy-five; Roscoe, two; Willow Creek, five; Pecatonica, one; Scipio, one. Total vote cast, four hundred and four, of which Rockford had a majority over all of two hundred and thirty-six. In commenting on this election, the late Judge Church said: "Whether there was any Osawattomie [evidently another form of the word Pottawattomie] voting at that election, I am unable to say, but one thing is certain: there were two hundred more votes polled than at the general election in August following."

The prospective village of Winnebago reached the highest point of all its greatness on the day when its ambitious claims were rejected by the county commissioners' court. Like Cardinal Wolsey, it fell like a bright exhalation in the evening. From that time it began to decline. In April, 1844, many of the lots were sold by the sheriff to satisfy delinquent taxes; and in 1847 the plat was vacated by a special act of the legislature.

Some years later Mrs. Campbell, widow of Major Campbell, by her attorney, appeared in Rockford, and made a claim for dower interest, on the ground that when her husband took the benefit of the bankrupt law, he assigned his interest in the Winnebago village property without her consent. Some were intimidated into paying these claims; and others successfully contested them.

Charles Reed was an excellent judge of land, and traveled from Fox river to Apple river, selecting and making claims. Mr. Reed was a native of Virginia. He served in the war of 1812, and was taken prisoner at Detroit, when Hull surrendered. He again enlisted, and was in the battle of the Thames, when Tecumseh was killed. Mr. Reed first settled in Illinois at Joliet. He was one of the commissioners to locate the county seat of Ogle county in 1836. Mr. Reed was influential in securing the passage of the act for the organization of Winnebago county. From Winnebago village he removed to Rockton, where he died August 26, 1863, at the age of seventy-nine years. Mr. Reed was highly esteemed as a citizen, neighbor and friend.

In pursuance of the popular vote in favor of Rockford, the county commissioners, on June 8, 1839, selected the public square on the east side of the river as the site for the court house. Anson Barnum and Daniel S. Haight were authorized

to accept stone and other building material. A large quantity of brick and lumber was contributed by the citizens. This material remained on the public square for a long time, because the county had no money to continue the work. At a special session held June 17, the court selected the southeast corner of block nine as a site for a jail. This is the site now occupied by the Rockford Gas Light and Coke Company. No jail, however, was built upon that location.

At the session of September 28, 1841, a proposition was submitted to the commissioners' court, to furnish a suitable jail and quarters for the county offices in West Rockford until permanent buildings could be constructed. This proposal was signed by Messrs. George Haskell, Charles I. Horsman, Abiram Morgan, John W. Taylor, David D. Alling, Nathaniel Loomis, Ephraim Wyman, Horatio Nelson, Derastus Harper and Isaiah Lyon. Upon executing a bond in the penal sum of one thousand dollars, this proposition was accepted. December 11th these gentlemen reported to the commissioners' court that the building for the county offices was ready for use, and the same was accepted by the court. This was a frame structure on the southwest corner of Main and Chestnut streets, opposite the Hotel Nelson. This building was occupied by the court until a court house was built, and only recently torn down to make room for a brick block. The donors, at this December session, were given an extension of five months to complete the jail. This was a log structure, about twelve feet square, with plank door, and window barred with irons set into the logs above and below. It stood east of the present court house, in the same block. Whenever a desperate character was confined therein it was necessary to station a guard. Previous to the erection of this primitive prison, the nearest jail was at Galena. When I. N. Cunningham was sheriff, he owned a substantially built house a short distance from town, and his brother William once prevented a prisoner from escaping at night by fastening one end of a chain to his ankle and the other to the ankle of the prisoner, and both were secured to the strong puncheon floor. Sixty years ago William Cunningham was a dangerous man to resist. The old log jail did duty after a fashion until the brick jail was completed.

About this time a controversy arose concerning the precise meaning of the statute under which the election of May, 1839, had been held. That portion of the third section of the law



enclosed in parenthesis was ambiguous. The point at issue was whether the law actually authorized an election to select a seat of justice, or merely to decide the general question of removal. This question was before the commissioners' court at its September session in 1841. Each commissioner held a different opinion. William Hulin held that the county seat had been removed from Winnebago, but had never been relocated. Ezra S. Cable maintained that all the provisions of the law had not been complied with, and therefore the county seat remained as originally located. William E. Dunbar believed the county seat had been actually removed to Rockford. This deadlock must be broken before progress was possible. May 10, 1842, the commissioners' court requested the bar of the city to submit opinions in writing concerning the legal effect of the popular vote. Opinions were prepared by Anson S. Miller, Francis Burnap, Thomas D. Robertson, James M. Wight and Jason Marsh. Mr. Miller's opinion was quite elaborate. The attorneys were unanimous in the opinion that the county seat had been changed from Winnebago to Rockford, in accordance with the evident intent of the law. At the session of July, 1842, the commissioners' court authorized the judges of election in the several precincts to take the sense of the voters at the August election on the question whether the county buildings should be permanently located in East or West Rockford. Several precincts did not vote on the question; but the general result was favorable to the West side, inasmuch as the temporary location of the county offices on that side had already given it a degree of prestige. This vote had no legal effect, however, because the law had given the commissioners' court full power in the premises. But it did have a certain persuasive influence.

In April, 1843, Daniel S. Haight, E. H. Potter, Hollis H. Holmes, Laomi Peake, Daniel Howell and John A. Brown, of the East side, submitted a proposition to the county commissioners to build a court house and jail, to cost four thousand dollars. This proposal was considered, but complications prevented its acceptance. A few days later, April 22d, citizens of West Rockford made a similar proposition. On condition that the commissioners select the site on the West side, the citizens agreed to erect such buildings as the county commissioners should direct, and according to such plan and finish as the commissioners should furnish for a court house, county offices and jail, the said buildings to be commenced before the first day of

June next, and the jail to be finished before the first day of January, 1844. The remainder of the said buildings were to be finished by the first day of November, 1844. The donors were to perfect and convey to the county a good title to the land on which the said buildings should stand, to the amount of two and a half acres. This proposition was signed by Messrs. George Haskell, Charles I. Horsman, H. W. Loomis, M. Burner, Charles Hall, Thomas D. Robertson, George W. Dewey, David D. Alling, H. R. Maynard, Alden Thomas, S. Skinner, George Barrows, John Fisher, Derastus Harper, Daniel Dow.

Nothing had been done on the East side toward erecting county buildings with the material which had been contributed; and the proposition from the West side citizens was accepted, with five conditions. These were: first, that security be given to the acceptance of the commissioners or any two of them, in term time or vacation within twenty days; second, that the security be a bond for twenty thousand dollars, and the buildings be worth not less than six thousand dollars; third, that said bond be placed in the hands of the clerk of the court within three days from its acceptance; fourth, that the subscribers to the proposition, or a majority of them, enter into a contract in writing within twenty days to erect the buildings as offered in their proposition; fifth, that the contract be placed in the hands of the clerk of the court within three days from its approval. The commissioners ordered that block twenty-five in West Rockford be the site of the buildings.

Thus closed a contest which had continued for seven years. An opinion prevails to this day that the cession of the mile-strip to Boone county insured the location of the county buildings on the west side of the river; and that the voters on the strip, if they had remained in this county, would have held the balance of power, which would have been exercised in the election of two commissioners from the east side of the river. The official records are clearly against this tradition. The county seat was permanently located in April, 1843; whereas, the election on the mile-strip did not occur until the following month. The result was due to a single citizen. William Hulin was elected a county commissioner in 1841, while a resident of Rockton, on the east side of the river. During his term of office he removed to West Rockford. Mr. Hulin's friends claim that his sympathies were always with the West side; while others maintain that this change of residence was quite naturally followed by a



change of sectional preference. In either event, Mr. Hulin gave the casting vote in favor of the West side.

It is quite certain, however, that the cession of the mile-strip had been regarded with favor for years by the citizens of the western part of the county. It is even alleged that the scheme was deliberately planned in West Rockford, to reduce the voting strength on the east side of the river. The citizens on the strip petitioned the legislature to be annexed to Boone; and as early as December 24, 1840, a bill was introduced in the senate, for a change in the boundary line of Boone county. December 30th, the bill was read the third time and passed. The bill came before the house January 13, 1841. It was subsequently amended and referred to a select committee. The *Rock River Express* of January 16, 1841, published a brief but vigorous protest against the proposed cession. The bill, however, was lost. Had it passed that session, it would doubtless have had its influence in the contest over the county seat. But the bill did not become a law until two years later. In the meantime the question had been settled in a different manner.

The brick jail was completed and occupied January 1, 1844. The court house was finished in July of the same year, and was accepted by the county commissioners. Derastus Harper and John Beattie were the architects. It was one story, about fifty-six feet long, thirty-five feet in width, and seventeen feet high. The court room was fifty-four by thirty-three feet; nine feet in the rear of the bench was partitioned off into jury rooms. Two rows of slips made in the style of those erected in the churches, filled the room outside the bar, and accommodated three hundred persons. The entire edifice, including the pediment and four fluted columns in front, was built in the Grecian Doric order of architecture. The public square, jail and court house were furnished by the citizens of West Rockford without the outlay of a dollar by the county. The stone building in which the county records were kept, was built in 1851. All these buildings have been removed from the square.

The first term of court held in the new building was in August, 1844. The presiding judge was Thomas C. Brown; James Mitchell, clerk; G. A. Sanford, sheriff. Many bright stars in the legal firmament of that day practiced in Winnebago county. Belvidere, Freeport, Galena and Chicago sent their best talent. The famous "Mat." Carpenter, of Wisconsin, came to Rockford on professional business half a century ago.



## CHAPTER XXXI.

### PLAN OF SECESSION AND PROPOSED ANNEXATION TO WISCONSIN.

SIXTY years ago Winnebago county figured prominently in a movement of secession from Illinois, for the purpose of annexation to Wisconsin. The few surviving settlers of northern Illinois will recall the prolonged controversy over the northern boundary of the state. This agitation covered the entire period between the admission of Illinois in 1818, and the admission of Wisconsin thirty years later. The story forms one of the most interesting chapters in the history of the commonwealth. The final adjustment is a perpetual witness to the prophetic genius of Nathaniel Pope, the territorial representative of Illinois in congress. In the light of subsequent history, it was nothing less than genius that enabled this man, alone and unchallenged, to add fifty miles to the northern boundary of Illinois; and thus make her, with her commercial metropolis on the lake front, the keystone in the magnificent arch of great western states. As a statesman and patriot, Nathaniel Pope is worthy to be placed at the head of the illustrious column which includes Lincoln, Douglas, Grant, Yates and Logan.

This movement was widespread, and the feeling at times was intense, and even bitter. The war cry of "fifty-four forty or fight" did not more thoroughly arouse the enthusiastic Democracy over the Oregon boundary line fifty-six years ago, than did this inter-state controversy enkindle the sectional prejudices of the settlers in the disputed territory. The village of Rockford played quite a part in this struggle. There was brought to light in this city about a year ago a copy of the official proceedings of a mass meeting held in Rockford July 6, 1840. This convention was composed of delegates from the northern fourteen counties of the state. Its purpose was secession from Illinois and annexation to the proposed new state of Wisconsin.

History has never fully explained the causes of this movement. Tradition alone has interpreted its true animus. The

apparent motive was a restoration of the boundary line as originally established between the two states that might be formed of the territory north of an east-and-west line running through the southerly bend of Lake Michigan. This line, it was claimed, had been arbitrarily and unfairly extended fifty miles north when Illinois became a state.

The real reasons for this movement were two: First, the settlers in the northern and the southern portions of the state had little or no interest in common. The northern portion was settled principally by people who had come from New England and New York. They were industrious, thrifty and progressive. They built towns and cities as by magic. The southern part of Illinois was settled by emigrants from the slave-holding states. They were generally poor, as the well-to-do people did not emigrate. In those days the poor man in the south was scarcely above the Negro in the social scale. This class came into southern Illinois from slave-holding states to escape the limitations of their former poverty. Between the people of the southern and the northern portions of the state was a great gulf fixed. Each misunderstood the other. The Illinois and Michigan canal was opposed by the people of southern Illinois for fear it would flood the state with Yankees. This conflict of interest and opinion was a continuation of the struggle between the civilizations of Plymouth and Jamestown. The Puritan and the class distinctions of the cavalier had entered the western arena, where a few years later Lincoln and Douglas fought the historic battle of the century.

The second reason for this sectional divorcement was the desire of the northern people to escape the burden of the enormous state debt, which had been created by the gigantic scheme of internal improvements. In 1840, during Governor Carlin's administration, the total debt of the state, principal and interest, was fourteen million six hundred and sixty-six thousand five hundred and sixty-two dollars and forty-two cents. The treasury was bankrupt; the revenue was insufficient; the people were not able to pay high taxes, and the state had borrowed itself out of credit. The state never repudiated its debt, but it simply could not pay it at that time. Moreover, the state had little to show for this vast expenditure. Southern Illinois dominated the state, and the people in the sparsely settled northern counties were not responsible for the creation of the state debt.

Such was the condition of affairs when the mass convention was held in Rockford in the summer of 1840. In order to more fully understand the historic situation at that time, it will be necessary to briefly refer to the document which gave a plausible pretext to the separatist movement. This was the ordinance for the government of the Northwest Territory, adopted in 1787. This ordinance provided for the division of this vast area for territorial purposes, which of course had no bearing upon the present matter. It further provided that not more than two states should be formed from the territory north of an east-and-west line running through the southerly bend of Lake Michigan.

In 1818 Illinois Territory petitioned congress for admission into the union on an equality with the original states. The petition defined the northern boundary of the state in accordance with the provisions of the ordinance of 1787. When the petition came before congress, Mr. Pope was instructed by the committee to report a bill in pursuance of the petition. Before the bill became a law it was amended by the extension of the boundary line from the southerly bend of Lake Michigan to forty-two degrees thirty minutes. Thus was added to Illinois a territory fifty miles from north to south, which now includes the northern fourteen counties of the state. These important and radical changes were proposed and carried through both houses of congress by Mr. Pope, entirely on his own personal responsibility. The territorial legislature had not petitioned for them, but the great and lasting advantage was so apparent that the action of Mr. Pope received the unqualified endorsement of the people.

When Wisconsin began to aspire to statehood, it was upon the language of the ordinance of 1787, above quoted, which was declared a compact to remain forever unalterable, that our northern neighbor based her claim to the territory north of the original line.

This question of boundary became an issue in local politics, and it was not until 1848, when Wisconsin became a state, that all hope of the restoration of the original line was abandoned.

In accordance with this widespread movement, which is said to have begun at Galena, a mass meeting was held at the Rockford House, in Rockford, July 6, 1840. One hundred and twenty delegates, who represented the entire territory in dispute, were in attendance. Among the supporters from Rockford



and the immediate vicinity were Dr. J. C. Goodhue, William E. Dunbar, Jason Marsh, Thomas D. Robertson, Horace Miller, Dr. Levi Moulthrop, Alonzo Corey, John W. Taylor, and Germanicus Kent, of Rockford; Daniel H. Whitney and James M. Loop, of Belvidere; and Martin P. Sweet, of Freeport. Dr. Goodhue was chosen permanent chairman of the convention.

One committee was appointed to prepare an address to the people of the disputed territory. A second committee was instructed to report resolutions declaratory of the right of Wisconsin to the territory in dispute. The preamble declared that it was the general if not the universal belief of the residents of the tract of territory in dispute, that the same by right and by law is a part of the Territory of Wisconsin; and that their interests would be advanced by the restoration of the original line, as defined by the ordinance of 1787.

The resolutions declared first, that it was the opinion of the meeting that the intention of the framers of the ordinance of 1787 for the government of the Northwest Territory, was that if congress formed one or two states north of the east-and-west line above mentioned, that the states south of the line should not extend north and beyond it; second, that congress, in thus extending the northern boundary of Illinois, transcended its power and violated the provisions of the ordinance.

It was also resolved that if the governor of Wisconsin Territory should issue a proclamation for an election of delegates to a convention for the formation of a state government, under the resolutions relating to the southern boundary, approved January 13, 1840, the citizens of the territory in dispute should elect delegates to the convention, according to the ratio fixed by the resolution.

The sixth resolution provided that a central committee of five be appointed to carry into effect the resolutions of the convention, and to inform the executive of Wisconsin of the status of public opinion. It was finally resolved that a copy of the proceedings of the convention should be signed by the president and secretary and forwarded to the governor of the Territory of Wisconsin.

Other boundary conventions were held in various parts of the district. A convention at Oregon City, January 22, 1842, adopted resolutions similar to those approved at Rockford eighteen months earlier. The delegates even went to the point of declaring that the ordinance of 1787 should not be changed

without the consent of the people of the original states, and of the Northwest Territory.

A meeting was held in Galena, March 18, 1842, of which Charles S. Hempstead was president. Strong resolutions were adopted. One declared that the annexation of the district to Illinois was an unlawful, arbitrary proceeding, and a dangerous precedent.

In June, 1842, the commissioners' court of Winnebago county submitted this question to a popular vote of the county at the August election. The returns were as follows: For annexation to Wisconsin, nine hundred and seventy-one; opposed to annexation, six.

A meeting of the citizens of Belvidere was held September 7, 1842, when it was decided to call a special election for the fourth Monday in September, in pursuance of the recommendation contained in the proclamation of Governor Doty, of the Territory of Wisconsin. Such an election was held, with a result similar to that in Winnebago county.

This prolonged agitation accomplished no result. The movement suddenly lost its momentum and became a spent force. The essential principle involved in the resolutions that were adopted at Oregon City was whether the congress of the United States under the constitution, had no power to amend a prior act of confederated states. In view of the subsequent evolution of the federal idea, under the splendid leadership of Webster and Marshall, it seems surprising that such a preposterous claim should have been seriously considered.

The beneficent results arising from the policy of Nathaniel Pope and the failure of the separatists are incalculable. No reflections are cast upon those who desired separation. They acted from worthy motives, but they could not foresee the future. Time has shown their error to have been that of judgment rather than of heart. The people of Wisconsin, however, have never been fully reconciled to the situation. From the standpoint of state pride, it may be said that in the collapse of the movement was the magnificent city of Chicago, "the queen of the north and the west," saved to Illinois. The wealthiest, most populous and progressive counties were preserved to our commonwealth, which has become the pride of the nation. In 1840 the people of northern Illinois were more in sympathy with the ideas and institutions of Wisconsin, because they had a common origin in the east. With the lapse of time the two

portions of the state have been wrought into a bond of indissoluble unity.

Moreover, there were national reasons why Illinois should not be dismembered. In all previous confederated republics there had been danger of dissolution. Illinois, by reason of her geographical position, is a pivotal state. With a port on the chain of lakes, her western shore bounded by the Father of Waters, and her southern and eastern borders drained by the Wabash and the Ohio, the commercial power of the Prairie State extends southward to the gulf, and eastward to the sea. Mr. Pope foresaw that none of the states in the west could venture a dissolution of the union without the assistance of a state which nature had planned should be large and powerful.

Nathaniel Pope belongs to the roll of forgotten statesmen. The sphere of his activity was limited. He did not in his day receive the recognition to which he was entitled. He builded wiser than he knew. He foresaw possibilities which his generation did not fully comprehend. In the clear light of today, that shines from the grandeur of the Prairie State, it must be said that Nathaniel Pope was a constructive statesman of the first rank.



## CHAPTER XXXII.

### ROCKFORD'S ATTITUDE TOWARD REPUDIATION OF STATE DEBT.

THE history of the bonded indebtedness of the states begins with the period from 1830 to 1840. At the beginning of that decade the aggregate debt of the several states amounted to only thirteen million dollars. Then began an era of extravagance in which certain states made enormous expenditures for internal improvements, and for funding their debts, negotiated large loans on long time. Within the twelve years succeeding 1830 the aggregate debt of the states had arisen to more than two hundred millions, an increase of more than sixteen hundred per cent.

As a relief from this burden, several states repudiated their debts. The constitution of the United States prohibits a state from passing laws "impairing the obligation of contracts;" and the supreme court had repeatedly affirmed that this clause includes cases to which the several states may be parties.

These decisions, however, indicated that the value of this contract clause depends upon other laws which provide for the enforcement of contracts. If a state owe a debt, her obligation depends upon existing laws for the enforcement of contracts against the state. If there are no such laws, the contract, though legal, may be practically worthless, if the state chooses to disregard its provisions. Under these circumstances, Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, North Carolina, South Carolina, Louisiana, Georgia, Arkansas, Tennessee and Virginia actually repudiated their debts.

Illinois narrowly escaped the odium of repudiation. At this critical period Thomas Ford became governor. On this point he says in his History of Illinois: "It is my solemn belief that when I came into office, I had the power to make Illinois a repudiating state." After July, 1841, no effort was made to pay even the interest on the debt; and her bonds declined to fourteen cents on the dollar. Ford was elected governor in 1842; and his title to fame securely rests upon the fact that he stemmed the tide, so that the larger portion of the debt was actually paid during his administration.

Notwithstanding the fact that the citizens of Winnebago county desired annexation to Wisconsin, in part by reason of this debt, there was no attempt made to repudiate the debt so long as they remained in the state. On the other hand, the citizens took an unequivocal position against such a ruinous policy. A call was issued for a meeting February 5, 1842, to consider the condition of the public credit. This call was signed by S. M. Church, S. D. Preston, George S. Haskell, Germanicus Kent, D. S. Haight, G. A. Sanford, Francis Burnap and others. It had been surmised that Illinois would refuse to pay its debt. This call was endorsed by a vigorous editorial in the *Rockford Pilot*, which closed with these words: "As this is a question of vital consideration to every citizen, we trust that a full attendance will be had on that occasion—that by your presence and your voices you may show to the world your opinion in regard to these surmises. Think not that your individual credit is independent of that of your state and nation. All power and all public acts emanate directly from the people, who are the sovereigns of the republic; and whatever honor or shame falls to your state, must be shared among you." The citizens' meeting was in sympathy with this editorial comment; and the moral influence of Winnebago county was thus placed on record against a repudiating policy that would have brought the state into everlasting disgrace.

Governor Thomas Ford, whom the people of Illinois should ever hold in grateful remembrance, was born at Uniontown, Pennsylvania, in 1800. He held various civil offices in his adopted state. In 1841 he was assigned as judge to the sixth judicial circuit, and while serving in Ogle county in this capacity, he received notice of his nomination for governor by the Democratic convention. He was elected in August, 1842, and was inaugurated in the following December. Governor Ford's *History of Illinois* is a readable and entertaining book, and will increase in value with the lapse of time. Governor Ford died at Peoria, November 2, 1850. The abject poverty of his last days was declared by the Mormons to be directly due to the curses pronounced against him by their prophet, Joseph Smith. Like many other illustrious men, Governor Ford combined intemperate habits with a high sense of official honor.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

### THE LYCEUM.—SETTLERS OF THE EARLY FORTIES.—MINOR NOTES.

THE lyceum was one of the popular institutions in the early days. The lecture bureau was unknown, and the opportunities for intellectual improvement were limited. A celebrated Frenchman said that when he wanted a new book, he wrote one. So the earlier residents of the village were dependent upon their own resources for literary entertainment. In this day the debating club is usually a feature of the district school; but sixty years ago the professional men of the village found recreation and profit in the arena of debate. Among the questions discussed in the winters of 1841-43 were the following: Is the British government justifiable in waging the present war with China? Would a protective tariff be sound policy for this government? Are we morally bound to abstain from all intoxicating drinks? Is Rock river a young river? The membership of the lyceum included Dr. Goodhue, Charles Latimer, James M. Wight, Anson S. Miller, Francis Burnap, Jason Marsh, J. A. Brown, William P. Dennis, Cyrus F. Miller, S. M. Church, Charles I. Horsman, T. D. Robertson, W. E. Dunbar, and other representative citizens. During the winter of 1840-41 James M. Wight delivered a lecture on The March of Mind, and Mr. Burnap gave two addresses on The Rise and Progress of Law.

The Whig Hill Lyceum considered its organization of such importance as to have it entered on the records of the county commissioners' court. At a meeting held at the home of Milton Kilburn, there was a debate on this grave problem: Which is the better citizen, the thief or the liar? The question never seems to have been authoritatively settled, and it is said the two classes are known to still exist.

Another society was the Mechanics' and Artisans' Institute. At one meeting it wrestled with the problem: Ought the congress of the United States to enact a general bankrupt law? After a lapse of more than half a century, and with the light of several experiments, it is still an open question, from a moral point of view.



Orrin Miller came to Rockford in 1843, and engaged in the practice of law. He was a brilliant and able attorney. Mr. Miller married a daughter of Willard Wheeler. About 1871 he removed to the Pacific coast. His death occurred at Pomona, near Los Angeles, in February, 1891. He was about seventy years of age. His remains were brought to Rockford for interment. Mr. Miller was a cousin of Mrs. William Brown.

Another early lawyer of the village was Grant B. Udell. His name is occasionally found on old legal documents; but he seems not to have been generally remembered.

Anson S. Miller was a prominent lawyer and politician half a century ago. He was elected state senator in 1846, was postmaster of Rockford under appointment of President Lincoln, and probate judge from 1857 to 1865. Judge Miller was one of the presidential electors in 1864, and was chosen by the electoral college to carry the vote of Illinois to Washington. Judge Miller was one of the old-school characters, dignified, slightly pompous, with a fund of good stories which he could relate *ad libitum*. Judge Miller died January 7, 1891, at Santa Cruz, California. For twenty years preceding his death he had resided in California. Judge Miller was eighty-two years of age. His father was Luther Miller, a native of Connecticut.

Cyrus F. Miller, a brother of Judge Miller, was born near Rome, New York. He came to Winnebago county in 1839 or '40, and was for many years a well known member of the local bar, and justice of the peace. Mr. Miller removed to Chicago in 1871, directly after the great fire. He practiced law in that city until 1876, when he returned to Rockford. His death occurred June 4, 1890, at Beatrice, Nebraska, and his remains were brought to Rockford for burial. Mr. Miller was about seventy-five years of age. Luther L. Miller, an attorney in Chicago, is a son; and Mrs. Israel Shoudy, of Rockford, is a daughter. Asher Miller, another brother, now a resident of California, was also an early settler. The father and three sons came to Rockford about the same time.

Daniel Dow is a native of Perthshire county, Scotland. He came to Rockford in 1841, and opened a boot and shoe store, and later he carried a general stock of merchandise. He purchased goods at St. Louis, and his first trip to that city was made by team to Galena, thence by the Mississippi to his destination. Mr. Dow continued in business until 1859, when he retired and traveled extensively. Upon his return to Rockford he began

dealing in grain. Mr. Dow served the Third ward as alderman for six years. He is the owner of the valuable Dow block on South Main street.

Lewis B. Gregory is a native of Seneca county, New York. He was born in 1820, of New England ancestry. His father was Rev. Harry Gregory, a Methodist minister. Mr. Gregory acquired a seminary education. He came to Rockford in 1843, and began teaching the same year. Mr. Gregory is probably the oldest living teacher in the county. After teaching several terms, he became interested in business on the old water-power on the east side of the river. He was a nephew of Samuel and Eliphalet Gregory, settlers of 1835. Mr. Gregory was married in Rockford to Miss Lucy E. Spafford, a daughter of Dan and Julia Spafford, who settled in Rockford in 1844. Mrs. Gregory died July 2, 1888. Their children are: Mrs. George N. Safford, Edward S. and George B., of Rockford; Carroll S., of Beloit; and Louis L., a physician of Chicago. One son, Charles, died in infancy. Mr. Gregory's present wife was Mrs. Stanbro, formerly of Memphis, Tennessee.

George Tullock is a well-known citizen of Scottish birth. He was born in 1815, and came to Rockford in 1841. At Chicago Mr. Tullock hired his passage with a teamster; but the roads were so bad that he started ahead on foot, and arrived in Rockford three days ahead of the team. Mr. Tullock was employed by Daniel Dow nearly four years as a shoemaker. He then became a farmer.

In January, 1843, a party of Pottawatomie Indians camped in the woods east of the town for several weeks. They were on their way to Milwaukee. They were straight, fine-looking Indians, mostly dressed in skins. There were about one hundred of them. One deeply scarred veteran claimed to be one hundred years old.

The winter of 1842-43 is known in local history as "the hard winter." The early settlers of the northern part of the state remember its first snow-fall, which began November 7th, and continued until the 10th; the extreme cold of the long winter, the scarcity of food for stock, and the loss of many cattle from hunger and cold by reason of the scarcity of barns and sheds for protection. The country was new; the settlements were sparse; and it was often miles across the dreary stretch of snow-covered prairie between settlements. Many of the houses



of the settlers were poor and open, without a tree or shrub to protect them from wind and snow. During this "hard winter" the snow averaged thirty inches in depth. It fell before the ground had frozen, and lay in such a body that the ground did not freeze at all, except in occasional places. The snow drifted to a height even with the top of the rail fences, and then froze so hard that it bore horses and cattle on its surface. During that winter great slaughter was made among the deer. The dogs, borne by the frozen snow, caught such numbers that the forests were cleared of them.

In August, 1841, there was a sudden change in the postmaster at Rockford. Edward Warren had been appointed in May to succeed Daniel S. Haight. Mr. Warren was a brother of Mrs. Charles H. Spafford. He built the upright part of the house now owned by Dr. Daniel Lichty, on the corner of Third and Walnut streets. Mr. Warren was succeeded in the summer of 1841 by Selden M. Church, who, in turn was followed by Charles H. Spafford, through Mr. Warren's influence, it is said. Mr. Warren and Mr. Church were Whigs. Mr. Warren subsequently went to Paris, and was a student in the Latin Quarter during the revolution of 1848.

In the autumn of 1844, Nathaniel Crosby, of Belvidere, conveyed to the "General Convention of the Baptist Denomination in the United States for Foreign Missions," by deed, lots in blocks five, seven, eight, nine, twenty-eight and forty-nine, the whole of block forty-six, and south park lots two and six in East Rockford. These lots were considered a generous gift.

The files of the *Rock River Express* and the *Rockford Pilot* show a creditable line of advertisements. In the *Express* of March, 1841, are found the cards of Tinker & Johnson, tailors; G. Haskell & Co., dry goods and groceries; John W. Taylor and C. Hitchcock & Co., also dealers in dry goods. In the issue of March 6th S. M. Church makes this announcement as assignee: "All persons indebted to Germanicus Kent are requested to call and adjust the same immediately." The *Pilot* of January, 1842, publishes an advertisement for Volney A. Marsh, who kept a general store in the north wing of the Winnebago House; the professional cards of T. D. Robertson, A. S. & Cyrus F. Miller, Charles F. Latimer, Grant B. Udell and Francis Burnap, attorneys; F. M. Putney, proprietor of Rockford House; David Paul, Washington House; Wyman & Houghton, clothing; *Chicago Democrat* and *Godey's Ladies' Book*.



## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### ORGANIZATION OF AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY.—THE FIRST FAIR.

AS early as August, 1840, a committee was appointed to draft a constitution and by-laws for the Winnebago County Agricultural Society. This committee deferred its report until the next March term of the county commissioners' court, in order to avail itself of the privilege of organizing the society under the statute "to incorporate agricultural societies," which was passed March 28, 1839. The act required the county commissioners to give due notice of the intention to form such society at that special term only, and precluded a legal organization in this county at an earlier date, under the provisions of the statute.

The Agricultural Society was organized April 13, 1841. Dr. Haskell was elected president; Robert J. Cross, vice-president; George W. Lee, secretary; Charles I. Horsman, treasurer; Horace Miller, Richard Montague, P. M. Johnson, James S. Norton, Newton Crawford, I. N. Cunningham, Jonathan Weldon, directors. An adjourned meeting was held July 5th, when President Haskell delivered an address, which has been preserved in full. September 8th a meeting of the officers was held to complete arrangements for the first cattle show. It was decided that the fair should be held annually in Rockford, alternating on the east and west sides of the river; that all the available funds of the society be distributed in premiums, and that the premiums be paid in agricultural publications.

The exhibition was held on the 13th of October. The stock was exhibited in the grove near the northeast corner of First and Oak streets, which was known as the Oak Openings, where the ground was covered with a beautiful tuft. A few splendid specimens of the primitive oak trees remain in the vicinity. Cattle and horses were tied to the trees; the sheep and hogs were confined in rail pens. The display of domestic articles and garden produce was made in the hall of the Rockford House. Charles I. Horsman exhibited a squash weighing one hundred and twenty-eight pounds. There were several loads of grain standing in the street in front of the Rockford House.

At two o'clock the society and visitors formed a procession, under direction of Jason Marsh, the marshal of the day, and marched to the court house, on the East side. Rev. Joel B. Potter offered prayer, and Dr. Goodhue delivered an address. He was eloquent in his prophecy of the future which awaited the farmers of this fertile valley. After these exercises dinner was served at the Rockford House. At half past five the committee on awards made its report. The premium list was brief. There were seven premiums offered for horses, six for cattle, four for hogs, and two for sheep; one for the best cultivated ten acres of land, one for the best twenty-five pounds of butter, one for the best cheese weighing over fifteen pounds, one for the best ten yards of flannel manufactured in the county, one for the best fifty skeins of sewing silk manufactured in the county, and one for the best ten pounds of sugar from the beet manufactured in the county. Thus was held, in a single day, the first cattle show in northern Illinois.

The editor of the *Rockford Pilot* referred to the event in this unique specimen of primitive journalism: "The cattle show came off yesterday in good style. The day was fine, the women were fine, the pigs were fine. The display of stock certainly exceeded our anticipations. Surely we live in a wonderful age. Mobs, miracles and morality are developing in a manner that would have bothered the brains of our forefathers. Here we are in a country that six years ago lay in the precise state in which it was moulded in the palm of the great Builder—not a tenement had ever been erected in this precinct to cover the head of a white man. Yesterday we saw a thousand people collected for the great object of improvement in the science of agriculture, and a display of domestic stock that would have been creditable to any portion of the United States. We saw silk that had been manufactured by the hands of the ladies of our place, and a variety of products that show the rapid strides that we are making toward perfection in the noble science of agriculture."

This society kept up its organization and annual exhibits for some years, when it ceased to exist. In 1852 another society was formed, out of which the present organization has developed. The latter was organized under a general law, approved in 1855. Until 1858 the society held its exhibitions on leased ground. In that year, twelve acres of land were purchased of C. I. Horsman, for six hundred dollars per acre. Later purchases were made, which increased the grounds to twenty-two acres.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

### THE REIGN OF TERROR.—THE BANDITTI OF THE FRONTIER.

THE frontier is always the prey of the banditti. From 1837 to 1845 the Rock river valley was infested with a notorious gang of outlaws. Among the leaders of this band were: John Driscoll, William and David Driscoll, his sons; John Brodie, and his three sons, John, Stephen and Hugh; Samuel Aikens, and his three sons, Richard, Charles and Thomas; William K. Bridge, Norton B. Royce, Charles Oliver, and Charles West. Besides these chiefs of the robber confederacy, there were a large number of subordinates scattered throughout the country.

The leaders of this gang were among the first settlers, and thus had the choice of locations. John Driscoll came from Ohio, and settled near Killbuck creek, Monroe township, Ogle county. William Driscoll settled at South Grove, in DeKalb county. David Driscoll resided a short distance east of the old village site of Lynnvile, in Ogle county. John Brodie lived in a grove of timber in Dement township. Samuel Aikens and his son Charles and William K. Bridge settled at Washington Grove, and Thomas and Richard Aikens and Norton B. Royce at Lafayette Grove, scarcely half a mile distant. Charles Oliver settled at Rockford, and made his home at the Rockford House. He had a good address, and was given four thousand dollars by his father when he left the parental home. About 1837, while he was an unknown member of this band of outlaws, he came within a few votes of being elected a justice of the peace, over James B. Martyn. Charles West made his home at Inlet Grove, in Lee county.

The operations of this band extended through the western and northwestern states. Along the entire line there were convenient stations, in charge of men who, to all appearance, were honest, hard-working settlers. Such was William McDole, a quiet, industrious resident of Rockford. Under this arrangement, a horse stolen at either end of the line or elsewhere could be passed from one station to another, and no agent be absent



from his home or business for more than a few hours at a time; and thus for years they remained unsuspected. At that time few counties were sufficiently organized to enforce efficient police regulations. This section was sparsely settled; the pioneers were poor, and money was scarce. There were few jails, and these were scarcely worthy of the name. For several years after the settlement of Winnebago county, the nearest jail was at Galena. There is a story to the effect that the sheriff of this county once took a culprit to Galena, and upon his return to Rockford his late prisoner was among the first to greet him.

This primitive condition of society was the opportunity of the border outlaw. Counterfeiting, horse-stealing, robbery and even murder were of such frequent occurrence that the settlers were driven to desperation. They resolved to adopt radical measures for relief; for if these outrages were continued, property was insecure, and life itself was in constant jeopardy. In the spring of 1841, a delegation of reputable citizens of White Rock and Paine's Point, in Ogle county, called upon Judge Ford, who was then holding circuit court at Oregon, for consultation. Judge Ford was a fearless man, and naturally well equipped to meet the peculiar conditions of pioneer life. Judge Ford knew that the settlers were at the mercy of the banditti, and that it was useless to invoke the civil authorities. He therefore advised them to organize a company, which should call upon the men whom they knew to be lawless, take them by force from their homes, strip them to the waist, and lash them with a blacksnake. He recommended thirty-six lashes as the first chastisement, and sixty for a second offense; and that the leaders should be given ten days in which to leave the country.

Judge Ford's advice was followed to the letter. A decree from the bench could not have been more faithfully executed. In April about fifteen citizens met at a log schoolhouse at White Rock and organized a company known as the Ogle County Regulators. By-laws and rules were adopted, and the membership increased to hundreds in Ogle and Winnebago counties. Ralph Chaney, then in his twentieth year, was an active member of this organization. Mr. Chaney is now a retired citizen of Rockford; and to him the writer is indebted for information of those stirring experiences.

John Earle was the first victim of this savage justice. It was proved that he had forced or induced a young man under twenty years of age to steal his neighbor's horse. Earle's coat

and vest were removed, and his arms pinioned. Six or seven men were chosen from the company to administer five lashes apiece. Mr. Chaney relates that a deacon of the church inflicted the most vigorous strokes. The result was quite unexpected. At the next meeting of the Regulators, Earle applied for membership, was admitted, and became a good worker.

The second instance occurred in the afternoon of the same day. The culprit's name was Daggett. Before coming to the west he had been a Baptist minister. He was not a shining example of the perseverance of the saints, a distinctive doctrine of that church; for he had fallen from grace with a dull, sickening thud. The Regulators were not agreed concerning his punishment; although his guilt was generally believed. A bare majority of one or two voted to release him. That night, however, the minority tied Daggett to a tree and gave him ninety-six lashes. Dr. Hobart examined him occasionally, to prevent fatal injury. This chastisement was denounced by the more conservative Regulators.

Soon after their organization, John Campbell was chosen captain of the Regulators. A short time after they had begun their work of extermination, Mr. Campbell received an epistle from William Driscoll, in which he offered battle with the most terrible oaths. The Regulators were challenged to meet him Tuesday, June 22d, at his home in South Grove. Mr. Campbell was generally recognized as the right man to lead such an organization. He was a devout Scotch Presbyterian, who had come from Canada.

At the appointed time one hundred and ninety-six men, armed with rifles and muskets, responded to the challenge. They were mounted on good horses; with the stars and stripes unfurled to the breeze, and a bugle, they formed in line, two abreast, and began the march to the field of battle. When they arrived at South Grove they found seventeen members of the gang in a log house, barricaded for defense, armed with fifty-four guns of different kinds. The Regulators halted just outside of gunshot and held a council of war. Before making an attack, it was resolved to send a messenger to the house, to ascertain the plans of the inmates. Osborn Chaney volunteered to beard the lions in their den. When within forty rods of the house the men broke through the door, and ran away; and Mr. Chaney did not get an opportunity to speak with any one of them. Soon after Mr. Chaney returned to the company he was fol-







### **SECOND NATIONAL BANK BLOCK**

Built about 1843 by Nathaniel Loomis, on the south-east corner of State and Main streets



### **W. G. CONICK'S RESIDENCE**

Built in 1838 by Daniel S. Haight, on the present site of the American House. Sessions of the circuit court for November, 1839, and April, 1840, were probably held in this house

lowed by a man named Bowman, who said he had a message from John Driscoll, to the effect that if the Regulators wished to confer with him, he would receive the message from Bowman, and from no one else. William Driscoll also sent word by the same messenger that he had three hundred allies at Sycamore, and that they would meet the Regulators on the prairie two hours later. The latter repaired to a level piece of ground, examined their guns, and awaited developments. In due time Driscoll arrived, with the sheriff of DeKalb county and two other officials, who wished to know the meaning of the demonstration. Captain Campbell stood in a wagon, and in a vigorous speech gave them the desired information. Meanwhile Driscoll sat on his horse about four feet distant. He was silent, but in a terrible rage. Mr. Chaney says he heard the grating of his teeth, and believes that then and there Campbell received his death sentence from Driscoll. The officials from DeKalb county expressed their sympathy with the Regulators, and the Driscolls promised to leave the state within twenty days. The Regulators disbanded for the day, and went home. The Driscolls did not keep their word. On the contrary, a meeting of the desperadoes was held on the following Saturday night at the house of William Bridge, at Washington Grove, where the murder of Campbell was planned.

On Sunday, June 27th, David and Taylor Driscoll, who had been chosen to murder Campbell, accomplished their purpose. Mr. and Mrs. Campbell had just returned from church at the log schoolhouse at White Rock. While going from the house to the barn about twilight, he was shot through the heart by David Driscoll. Ralph Chaney was making his home with his brother Phineas about three-quarters of a mile distant. He heard the report of the gun and the cries of the family. He and Phineas immediately went to the assistance of the Campbell family. Mr. Campbell walked about forty feet, and fell dead.

News of the tragedy spread quickly to Rockford and other towns. Mrs. Campbell was a witness of the murder, and there was no doubt about the identity of the assassins. On Monday the sheriff of Ogle county and a posse arrested John Driscoll at the home of his son David, near Lynunville. Mr. Chaney gives this incident of the arrest: "When he was arrested he said: 'I always calculate to hold myself in subjection to the laws of my country.' A daughter who was stopping there, a woman grown, large and strong, when the sheriff announced that he was



a prisoner, turned and faced her father, and their eyes met, and there was that kind of a look I can hardly describe, passed between them, and as she held his eye she nodded her head to him. Nothing said, but such a look I never saw in the world."

The sheriff and his posse then went to South Grove in search of William Driscoll. The elder Driscoll was seated in a wagon between two guards. A company from Winnebago county had preceded them, and had arrested William and his younger brother Pierce. The sheriff took his prisoner to Oregon and lodged him in jail.

About nine o'clock Tuesday morning a party went to the jail, and with heavy timbers battered down the door. They took John Driscoll from his cell, put a rope around his neck, and dragged him to the river as rapidly as possible. The sheriff pursued, but before he could overtake them, they had entered a boat with their prisoner and were soon on the other side of the river. There they met a man from Washington Grove, who told them there was a party at that place who had taken the two sons, William and Pierce. They then proceeded with John Driscoll to Washington Grove, where they met the Rockford division. By this time, about ten o'clock in the forenoon, the crowd had increased to about five hundred. Nearly every class of people was represented. The horsemen dismounted, secured their horses, and stacked their arms around a tree. They formed a hollow square around the tree, and brought the three Driscolls into the centre. Among the lawyers present was E. S. Leland, who acted as the leader, and conducted an examination of the prisoners. A mob court was instituted. The senior Driscoll was asked how many horses he had stolen in his time; to which he replied that he supposed he had taken as many as fifty. "Could you not say a hundred?" asked an inquisitor; and the old man, with a faint smile, said: "It might be." He confessed that he had paid young men from fifteen to twenty-five dollars to steal a horse from a neighbor, simply to satisfy a grudge, when he received no pecuniary reward from the theft. William Driscoll was similarly interviewed. Pierce Driscoll was examined, but no evidence was found against him, and he was given his liberty.

John and William Driscoll were then told that David and Taylor had been identified as the murderers of Campbell; also that the evidence had proved them to be accessories in the plot at Bridge's house on the preceding Saturday



evening. After further deliberation, Mr. Leland called for an expression of opinion upon the guilt of the prisoners, by the uplifted right hand. The decision was almost unanimous against them. The vote upon their punishment was equally decisive that they should be hung, then and there; and they were given one hour in which to prepare for death. The condemned men implored their executioners to change the method of death from hanging to shooting. This request was granted by a unanimous vote. The senior Driscoll had stood in the meantime with the rope around his neck, and he asked Mr. Chaney to remove it.

The arrangements for the execution occupied about an hour and a half. Jason Marsh, of Rockford, was present, and proposed to Charles Latimer, as an additional formality, to defend the prisoners, and present their case before the mob court. Mr. Marsh then made the opening plea for the prisoners; "and I must say," writes Mr. Chaney, "he did himself credit, and full justice to the prisoners in his speech. Latimer followed in behalf of the people, and made a very able speech." There were several ministers of the gospel on the scene, who spent the time allowed the prisoners in prayer and conversation with them. It was an occasion of great solemnity. Righteous wrath was expressed in the resolute and orderly execution of mob justice.

When the hour for execution arrived, about one hundred and twenty men were drawn up in a line, in single file. This line was divided in the center. John Driscoll was led out by Captain Pitcher, in full view of his executioners. He was made to kneel ten paces in front of the west half of the line. His eyes were blindfolded, and his arms pinioned behind him. At the signal, every gun, save one, was fired in a single volley. John Driscoll fell forward on his face without a struggle or groan, or the apparent movement of a muscle.

William Driscoll was then brought out and placed at the same distance before the center of the other half of the line. He was blindfolded, pinioned, and made to kneel upon the ground. As Judge Leland counted three, the volley of more than fifty guns was as the sound of one. William Driscoll was dead. The father and son fell about forty feet apart. A grave was dug between them, about two and one-half feet deep, and four feet wide. The old man was first taken and placed in the grave, without coffin or shroud; and then the son was laid by his side. Their caps were drawn over their faces, and thus they were buried, without

the presence of a mourning friend. Mr. Chaney assisted in carrying the elder Driscoll to the grave, and discovered that the bones of his head were literally broken to pieces, and the region of the heart perforated with bullets. In William Driscoll's vest front were found forty bullet-holes. After their execution one of their guard stated that William Driscoll in his prayer confessed he had committed five murders, and prayed to be forgiven. It is said that just before he was led out to die, William called his brother Pierce and said: "They are going to kill me, and I want you to take that money of mine that is hid and give my children a liberal education, and spend it for their support until they become men and women and grown. There is a plenty of it." Pierce expressed his willingness to do so, but said: "I don't know where your money is; you have never told me." William tried to tell him, but exclaimed: "O my God! I can't do it!"

A strange sequel occurred many years later. The farm that had been owned by William Driscoll became the property of a man named Byers. One day in autumn, while he was threshing, three men came on horseback and entered the grove west of the house. After surveying the premises, they located a spot and began digging. Byers ordered them to stop, but he was confronted by a revolver and an order to return and mind his own business. After their departure, Byers went to the spot and found a hole which they had dug in the ground, and beside it a small empty box, and at the bottom of the hole the mark and place from which the box had been dug. No explanation was ever found. A reward of five hundred dollars was offered in August, 1841, for the capture of David and Taylor Driscoll, by a committee of the citizens of Ogle county.

David Driscoll never returned. It was reported that about two years after the murder of Campbell; he was shot dead in Iowa by a sheriff who was attempting to arrest him. Taylor Driscoll was indicted for the murder of Campbell, and kept in different jails nearly two years; and by changes of venue and confusion of witnesses, he was at length given his liberty.

Throughout these strange proceedings the Regulators were sustained by the ablest lawyers and best citizens throughout the country. "Doctors and scholars, ministers and deacons" regarded this terrible example of lynch law as a public necessity. One notable exception to this general public sentiment was the *Rockford Star*. In its issue of July 1, 1841, its editor, Mr. Knappen, denounced the lynching in severe terms. He also

published in the same number of the *Star* a communication of similar import, signed Vox Populi, said to have been written by Jacob Miller.

Some months after the execution of the Driscolls, the matter was brought before the attention of the grand jury in Ogle county. Judge Ford then resided at Oregon, and it is said this action was taken at his suggestion. At the September term of the circuit court, indictments were found against one hundred and twelve citizens. Among these were four Chaney brothers, Richard, Phineas, Osborn and Ralph, three of whom became residents of Rockford; and Horace Miller, Jason Marsh and Charles Latimer, of Winnebago county. The case was called for trial at the same term of court. Judge Ford presided, and Seth B. Farwell appeared for the people. Some of the jurors were under indictment for complicity in the affair. Several witnesses were called, and pleas made; and without leaving their seats the jury returned a verdict of "not guilty." No one expected a conviction; but it was considered desirable to have the matter settled according to the regular form of law. Thus closed the trial of the largest number of defendants ever indicted under one charge at one session of a grand jury known to the judicial history of this section.



## CHAPTER XXXVI.

ROBBERY OF M'KENNEY AND MULFORD.—COLONEL DAVENPORT.

THE execution of the Driscolls was only the beginning of the work of extermination; although it was the sole instance where such desperate measures were considered necessary to accomplish their purpose. Robberies and murders continued, and the people lived for years under a literal reign of terror.

September 19, 1843, the store of William McKenney, near the site of 318 East State street, in Rockford, was robbed of a trunk containing nearly twelve hundred dollars. Bradford McKenney, his brother, who slept in the store at the time, gives a vivid account of the robbery in Mr. Thurston's *Reminiscences*. The narrative, in its use of adjectives and interjections, requires some revision in order to make it conform to the canons of good literary style. The robber, in his hasty flight, left eight dollars in silver, in the trunk. The next day several dollars were found at another place; and the next spring James Gilbert found sixty-two dollars only a few rods from where the trunk was rifled of its contents. A reward of two hundred dollars was offered for the apprehension of the thief and the recovery of the money; but he was an expert, and eluded capture.

The community was startled two weeks later by another bold depredation. Monday evening, October 2, one of the four-horse coaches belonging to Frink, Walker & Co. was robbed four miles from Rockford, while enroute to Chicago. It is said the baggage of the passengers was stolen from the rear of the coach while in motion, and that the fact was not discovered until its arrival in Newburg. The next morning the trunks were found a few rods from the road. They had been broken open and all property of any value had been taken. A plan had been laid to secure a large amount of money which had been on deposit in the land office at Dixon, and this was the object which it was intended to accomplish by the robbery of the stage coach at this time. It was known that a considerable sum of money, which had been received from the sales of public

lands, was on deposit at Dixon, and was about to be removed. A leader of the banditti had asked the receiver when he intended to go to Chicago, where the deposit was to be made. The receiver was a prudent man, and his suspicions were aroused. He therefore replied that he would leave Dixon one week later than he really intended to start; he thus baffled the plot of the robbers. The *Rockford Forum*, in commenting on this affair, said: "What renders these transactions still more exciting is, that they are performed by those who are perfect scholars in the business movements of the town." No immediate clue to this robbery was obtained.

In November, 1844, William Mulford, residing on his farm in Guilford, four and a half miles east of Rockford, on the Cherry Valley road, was robbed of five hundred dollars in money. It had been falsely reported that Mr. Mulford had received about fourteen thousand dollars a short time before; and this rumor had reached the robbers. October 28th a man who gave the name of Haines called on Mr. Mulford and professed to be in search of employment. His real purpose was to obtain money by other means than honest toil; and he had come to look over the premises. On Saturday, November 9th, about eight o'clock in the evening, three masked men, armed with pistols, knives and clubs, forced an entrance into the house. The leader ordered Mr. Mulford to sit down. He then took the candle from the table, cut it into three pieces, lighted them, placed one in each of the two windows, and with the third he began his search of the house. With the most direful threats the family were forced to submission. The keys to the bureau drawers were demanded. They were told that they were in the stable behind the horses. This was a ruse to give Mr. Mulford an opportunity to reach his rifle in another part of the room. When the men went to the barn he attempted to reach the gun, but another man, who had been stationed at the door, held a pistol close to his head and ordered him to desist. The robbers could not find the keys in the barn, and returned in a rage to the house. They swore they would "chain the old devil," and set the house on fire, and by that time they would tell where the keys were. Mrs. Mulford imagined she heard the clanking of chains, and told the robbers where the keys could be found. They unlocked the drawer and found the money in an envelope, just as it had been taken from the bank. One of the gang was identified as Haines,

who had called in search of employment. It was subsequently learned that two men, armed with rifles, stood outside, and for their benefit the candles were placed at the windows.

The long period of border brigandage reached its climax in the murder of Colonel Davenport. On the western shore of Rock Island, overlooking the main branch of the Mississippi, and facing the Iowa side, fifty-five years ago stood a beautiful residence. For more than thirty years it had been the home of Colonel George Davenport. He was generally esteemed for his generous impulses and social qualities. His wealth had been acquired as an Indian trader. Governor Ford gave him the credit of being the author of the life of Black Hawk which purported to be the Autobiography of the old warrior.

On Friday, July 4, 1845, Colonel Davenport's family joined the people of the Illinois mainland, in an observance of the national holiday. While alone in his parlor, Colonel Davenport was assaulted by three men, blindfolded, pinioned and dragged up a flight of stairs to a closet containing an iron safe. The robbers obtained between six and seven hundred dollars in money; but they were not satisfied, and demanded more. The old man pointed with a feeble hand to a dressing-table. The murderers missed the drawer containing the money, and opened another, in which they found nothing of value. Believing that their victim intended to deceive them, they beat and choked him until he became unconscious. They revived him by dashing cold water in his face, and again demanded more money, with the same result. They then threatened to "fry him upon coals of fire" if he did not disclose the hiding-place of his money. The old Colonel fell back exhausted, unable to answer. After his assassins left he regained consciousness, related the circumstances of the assault, and died about nine o'clock of the same evening.

Thus far the perpetrators of these bold outrages had eluded capture. But Nemesis was on their trail; and in due time she will summon a cloud of witnesses to bring them to justice. In the spring of 1845 Charles West, of Lee county, was arrested for the robbery of a peddler named Miller, and a portion of the goods was found in his possession. West was committed to jail at Dixon, and during his confinement he proposed to turn state's evidence, and disclose all he knew concerning his confederates. It was an instance where "the devil was sick, the devil



a monk would be." His proposition was accepted, and West made what he professed to be a full confession, and declared that Charles Oliver and William McDole, of Rockford, were members of the band. He also gave the names of the outlaws who committed the robberies at McKenney's store and Mulford's farm-house.

This startling intelligence soon reached Rockford, and created great excitement. Upon the strength of West's statements, Oliver and McDole were immediately arrested, and an officer was dispatched to bring West to Rockford, to give his testimony at their examination. Oliver and McDole were given a hearing about the 7th of June. West testified that he was at Oliver's house about a year before, when the plans of the gang were discussed in detail. McDole and Sutton were also present at the same time. McDole and Oliver talked about a pal named Burch in connection with the McKenney robbery. McDole discovered where the money was kept, and Burch entered at the window and obtained the booty. In the proposed raid upon Mr. Mulford, Oliver and McDole were to ascertain the situation of the house, and Burch and one or two others were to get the money.

Such, in brief, was the testimony given by West. His story was generally believed. Oliver and McDole were required to give bail in the sum of fifteen hundred dollars each, for their appearance at the next term of court; in default of which they were committed to prison. A few days later Bridge, one of the leaders of the banditti residing in Ogle county, was arrested and placed in jail at Rockford. A guard was necessary for some time, for their protection.

The trial of Oliver began in the circuit court August 26, 1845. His indictment was for receiving money stolen from William Mulford, in November, 1844. Hon. Thomas C. Brown was the presiding judge. The jurors were: Giles Mabie, Calvin Haskell, J. Heath, Jr., George Dixon, Phineas Howes, Ezra C. Tracy, Asa Farnsworth, Asa Crosby, Andrus Corbin, Harvey Higby. There was an unusual display of legal talent. The district attorney was James M. Loop. He was assisted by Thomas D. Robertson, Jason Marsh, James M. Wight, and Miller & Miller. Martin P. Sweet, of Freeport, and M. Y. Johnson, of Galena, were the counsel for the defendant. Among the witnesses on the stand were: William Mulford, Charles H. Spafford, G. A. Sanford, D. Howell, E. S. Blackstone, William J. Mix, of Oregon,

Charles West, of Lee, and S. C. Fuller, the jailer. The last named witness testified that the prisoners tried to bribe him to furnish them with brace and bits so that they might effect their escape. Each offered Mr. Fuller fifty dollars at first, and then increased the sum to five hundred. During the trial Oliver was defiant, and confident of acquittal. But since his arrest Retributive Justice had been forging another chain of convicting evidence.

During the summer Jason Marsh had received a letter from the warden of the penitentiary at Jackson, Michigan, to the effect that a prisoner in his charge knew about the robbery, and was willing to testify. Mr. Marsh went to Michigan and found the prisoner to be Irving A. Stearns, who had formerly resided in this county, and who had left the state soon after the robbery. He had been convicted of some crime in Michigan and sent to the penitentiary. Mr. Marsh pretended not to recognize Stearns; but told him that he wanted to know what he had to say upon the subject, and that he would know if he told the truth. Mr. Marsh found the testimony of the prisoner very important, and communicated the facts to the governor, who gave to Mr. Marsh a conditional pardon for Stearns. The prisoner's communications to Mr. Marsh, however, were made without any promise of consideration whatever. Mr. Marsh returned to Rockford, and at the time for the court to convene, he sent for Stearns, and upon his arrival he was placed in close confinement until he was wanted in court. Oliver knew nothing of these facts. When the name "Irving A. Stearns" was called as a witness for the people, Oliver was startled, and sat crest-fallen by the side of his counsel. Courage and hope had fled together. Stearns testified that the secrets of the Mulford robbery had been given by Oliver, and that Oliver had offered him some of the stolen money in exchange for a horse. His evidence was straightforward, and a rigid cross-examination failed to weaken it at any point.

The case was given to the jury Saturday afternoon. The jury was out an hour and a half, when it returned with a verdict of guilty, and a sentence of eight years' confinement in the penitentiary. Thus terminated the most exciting criminal case ever tried in Winnebago county. The case was managed with great ability on both sides. The argument of James Loop and the exploit of Jason Marsh have become familiar traditions of the local bar of the olden time.

Bridge took a change of venue on all his indictments to Ogle

county. When his case was called he plead guilty, and was sentenced to the penitentiary for seven years. McDole's trial began November 26, 1845, and the case was given to the jury December 1st. After an all-night's session the jury brought in a verdict of guilty, with a sentence of seven years in the penitentiary. The attorneys for the state were Marsh & Wight, Miller & Miller, and T. D. Robertson. McDole was defended by John A. Holland, Grant B. Udell, of Rockford, and Martin P. Sweet, of Freeport. The court ordered that one month of the term of imprisonment be spent in solitary confinement.

John Long, Aaron Long, and Granville Young were executed at Rock Island in October, 1845, for the murder of Colonel Davenport. This execution practically completed the work of extermination which had been begun by the Ogle County Regulators on Tuesday, June 29, 1841.

Burch was indicted for the murder of Colonel Davenport. He took a change of venue to another county, and made his escape from jail. The three Aikens brothers died as they had lived, although they escaped the penitentiary. Bliss, Dewey and Sawyer, confederates in Lee county, were sent to the penitentiary. Bliss died in prison. The way of the transgressor is hard.

The *Prairie Bandits*, written by Edward Bonney, is a stirring tale of those early days. Bonney was a newspaper man, who did some detective work. His book was first printed about fifty years ago, and there have been several subsequent editions.



## CHAPTER XXXVII.

### TRANSPORTATION: NAVIGATION OF ROCK RIVER.—PLANK ROADS.

THE early settlers foresaw that this section of country could not become prosperous without improved facilities for transportation. At that time the navigation of Rock river seemed to offer the most feasible solution of the problem. January 11, 1840, a meeting of the citizens of Winnebago county was held at Rockford. There was no newspaper in the town until some months later, and the only report of the convention was published in John Wentworth's paper, the *Chicago Democrat*, in its issue of February 12th. The purpose of the meeting was to consider the expediency of asking congress for a grant of unsold land in the valley of Rock river, the proceeds to be applied to the improvement of the stream. Dr. Goodhue was chosen president; George Stevens, George W. Lee and Charles I. Horsman, vice-presidents; John C. Kemble, secretary. Resolutions were introduced by George W. Lee, and unanimously adopted. They were as follows:

*Resolved*, That the increasing commerce of the lakes and the Mississippi river and the surplus productions of the Rock river country require a speedy action on the part of the numerous population settled throughout the territory lying between Lake Michigan and the upper Mississippi, to effect the removal of the obstructions to steamboat navigation in Rock river.

*Resolved*, That the interests of the government of the United States, holding in its control the great portion of the unsold lands in the region of Rock river, are essentially connected with those of the people in effecting the navigation of Rock river from the termination of the Milwaukee and Rock river canal to its junction with the Mississippi river; and that such an improvement will increase the value of the public domain in Iowa, by opening to that territory the benefits of an eastern market.

*Resolved*, That application be made to the congress of the United States for the appropriation of one hundred and fifty thousand acres of the public lands, the proceeds of which to be

applied to the improvement of the navigation of Rock river, and that we apply for the same to be selected from the residue of those not taken up by the settlers or other purchasers at the government land sales, and within twenty miles of either bank of Rock river.

*Resolved*, That a committee of five persons be appointed by this meeting to draft a memorial to congress, embodying the facts necessary to sustain the views expressed in the above resolutions, that said memorial be circulated for the signatures of citizens residing in the vicinity of Rock river.

Whereupon, George W. Lee, John C. Kemble, Jason Marsh, J. B. Miller and S. C. Fields were chosen said committee.

*Resolved*, That we earnestly solicit the co-operation of the people of the different counties in Illinois, and those of the territories of Wisconsin and Iowa, who feel interested in opening a water communication (through Rock river) between the lakes and the upper Mississippi, to hold meetings and circulate memorials expressive of their views, and embracing the objects set forth in the proceedings of this meeting, and to forward the same to their representatives in congress.

Dr. Goodhue, George W. Brinckerhoff, and Daniel S. Haight were chosen a committee to correspond with the people of the counties on the river on the subject of the resolutions.

This convention did not lead to any practical results. The agitation, however, was continued for some years. February 28, 1844, the Rockford *Forum* announced that the steamboat Lighter from St. Louis would ascend Rock river on the opening of navigation in the spring. Patronage was solicited; and the *Forum* advised the citizens to make exchanges of grain for provisions. The Lighter arrived in Rockford in the latter part of June. On the 1st of July the steamer made a trip to Roscoe.

The visit of the Lighter renewed the interest in the improvement of the river. July 13th a meeting was held at the court house to consider the subject. Committees were appointed and resolutions adopted. November 22, 1844, a river convention was held at Sterling. Delegates were present from Ogle, Winnebago, Lee and Whiteside counties. William Pollock, who had been employed to make a survey, presented a report. He stated that he had made an examination of Rock river from the mouth of the Pecatonica to Sterling, a distance of about one hundred miles; and estimated that the total cost of removing all obstructions between these points at four thousand

three hundred and sixty-six dollars and seventy-five cents. This was an insignificant sum, and was probably far below what the actual cost would have been. The general government had done nothing in response to the petition sent in 1840; and the assistance of the state legislature was invoked. February 25, 1845, an act was approved for the improvement of Rock river. Duncan Ferguson, of Winnebago, John Dixon, of Lee, Spooner Ruggles and William W. Fuller, of Ogle, and Theodore Winn, of Whiteside, and their successors were made a body politic and corporate under the name of the "Board of Commissioners for the improvement of the navigation of Rock river." The commissioners were authorized to remove all the obstructions to steamboat navigation between the mouth of Pecatonica river and the mouth of Rock river. For the purpose of creating a fund for making these improvements, it was provided that a tax should be levied for the year 1845, of seven and one-half mills on every dollar's worth of assessable personal property in Winnebago, Ogle, and Lee counties. In October, 1845, operations were actually begun at Rockford, under the direction of Alonzo Hall. A cofferdam about fifty feet wide was built through the rapids. A wheel at the lower end, propelled by the current, baled out the water. A steamboat channel was excavated in the autumn and winter, and the rock piled outside the dam. The "improvement" ruined the ford; and was absolutely useless for navigation, as the rapids at the mouth of the river in ordinary stages of water would not float a steamer. Similar attempts at improvement were made in the other counties during the year. The money which remained on hand after these expenditures was to be refunded pro rata, as provided by the law, to the counties from which it had been collected.

This failure, however, stimulated further effort. The promoters of the scheme became more audacious than before. Not only was it decided to make Rock river navigable to the mouth of the Pecatonica; it was now also proposed to seek the aid of the government in the construction of a ship canal which should connect Lake Michigan with Mississippi river. January 1 and 2, 1846, a ship canal convention was held in Rockford. Delegates were present from northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin. Martin P. Sweet, of Freeport, said this section needed a railroad to the east, and free navigation to the south, so that the people could have a choice of markets. He believed the government should aid in constructing such a waterway. A committee was



appointed to draft resolutions expressing the sense of the convention.

On Friday, January 2d, the committee presented its resolutions, which were unanimously adopted. It was declared that in the judgment of the convention, the project of connecting the great lakes with the Mississippi river was purely national in its character; that the cheapest and best mode of effecting this communication was by means of slack-water navigation of Rock river, and by a properly constructed canal connecting it with Lake Michigan; and that the completion of this work in connecting the Atlantic ports on the east with the Gulf of Mexico on the south would form a strong bond which would unite more firmly the north and the south for mutual defense. A committee was appointed to draft a memorial to the proper authorities for the survey of the route, and to present a memorial to congress, praying for the construction of a ship canal. Martin P. Sweet was made chairman. The members of the committee from this county were Jason Marsh, John A. Holland and James M. Wight. A committee of five from each county was also chosen to obtain an expression of public sentiment concerning the project. The members of the committee from Winbago were C. I. Horsman, S. M. Church, William Hulin, Robert J. Cross, Alonzo Hall.

Ship-canals, however, are not constructed by resolution, and the usual results followed. In the winter of 1865-66 the subject was revived, and February 22d a convention was held at Rockford. Letters were read from General Stephen A. Hurlbut, of Belvidere, Hon. John F. Farnsworth, and others. Another convention was held at Beloit March 15th. But better railroad facilities had by that time indefinitely delayed, if not forever defeated the construction of an inter-state waterway. Had it not been for the advent of the railroad, the improved navigation of Rock river would in time have been recognized as a public necessity. In the autumn of 1899 the subject was again considered by the citizens of Rockford and those residing along the course of the river; but up to February, 1900, no definite results had been accomplished.

The improvement of navigation facilities was not the only means by which the settlers sought relief from imperfect transportation. Chicago was the nearest grain market. The only communication with that city was by stage and wagon. In

the spring and autumn months, when the deep soil of the prairies was saturated with water, the journeys were slow and tedious. A farmer who had drawn a load of produce to Chicago often received a discouraging margin of profit. A charter had been obtained in 1836 for a railroad between Chicago and Galena. The county, however, was thinly populated, and the people were too poor to make subscriptions. Moreover, eastern capitalists had little confidence in the future of Illinois. The state was burdened with debt; and many of the people openly advocated repudiation. This uncertainty about a railroad continued more than ten years. Meanwhile the citizens were considering other plans. In 1844 preliminary surveys were made for a plank road from Chicago to Rockford.

A committee of citizens residing on the proposed route was held at Elgin September 20, 1844. This committee had been chosen to collect facts relating to plank roads, and to furnish estimates of cost. J. Young Scammon, of Chicago, and Jason Marsh were members of this committee. Edward B. Talcott, an experienced engineer, was sent by the committee to Canada to examine the plank roads there in use, and to ascertain their cost and manner of construction. On the 19th of November the committee submitted its report, also a detailed statement prepared by Mr. Talcott. He estimated the cost of the road at three hundred and twelve thousand seven hundred and thirty-one dollars and twenty-nine cents. Public meetings were held along the line.

January 21, 1845, the Chicago and Rock River Plank Road Company was incorporated by special act. The commissioners appointed to receive subscriptions in Belvidere and Rockford were Alexander Neely, Lyman Downs, Joel Walker, Daniel Howell, C. I. Horsman and Jason Marsh. Among the commissioners from Chicago was Walter L. Newberry, who became the founder of the magnificent Newberry reference library in Chicago. The corporation was given absolute right of way, with power to institute condemnation proceedings when necessary for the purchase of land. The demand for plank roads became general throughout the state; and in February, 1849, an act was passed for the construction of plank roads under a general law.

Mr. Colton, in his *Forum*, discouraged the construction of a plank road from Chicago to Rockford. He said eastern capital could not be secured for such a doubtful enterprise; and

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predicted that "sooner far could it be obtained for a railroad on the same ground, and we fully believe that one will be built before a plank one will be completed." Public sentiment showed that Mr. Colton was a prophet without honor in his own country; but time vindicated his claim to the gift of prophecy. No plank road was constructed, under the provisions of the charter. The thunder of the iron horse was heard in the distance; the day of the railroad was at hand.



## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

NEW ENGLAND UNITARIANISM.—FIRST CHURCH.—REV. A. H. CONANT.

A NUMBER of the early settlers from New England were Unitarians of the old school. An effort to organize this sentiment was made as early as 1841. The first meeting for this purpose was held February 3d. A subscription list of this date was found among the papers of the late Francis Burnap. It contained pledges amounting to one hundred and sixty dollars for the support of a Unitarian clergyman. At the same time a committee was appointed to promote this interest. An adjourned meeting was held on the 13th at the Westside school-house, and an organization completed. Richard Montague, Isaac N. Cunningham, Francis Burnap, Ephraim Wyman and James M. Wight were elected trustees. A statute of 1835 concerning Religious Societies provided that immediately after an election of trustees, a certificate of the same should be filed for record with the recorder of the county. The filing of such record constituted the trustees a body corporate and politic. The trustees complied with this law. The *Rock River Express* of February 20th announced that Rev. Joseph Harrington would preach at the court house on the following Sunday.

There is no record of any progress during the next two years, and it may be concluded that there was only an occasional preaching service. Early in March, 1843, Rev. Joseph Harrington, of Chicago, came to Rockford and preached every evening of one week on the distinctive doctrines of Unitarianism. The meetings were well attended, and a new interest awakened. On the following Sunday, March 9th, a church was organized, with the following covenant: "We whose names are subscribed, do unite ourselves together in Christian fellowship to partake of the Lord's supper, and to receive the spiritual benefit that may be derived from membership with Christ's visible church on earth. And may God grant his Spirit to help our manifold infirmities, and lead us in heart and in practice unto him who is the 'way, the truth and the life.'" This language is decidedly

evangelical in spirit. It is Unitarianism as interpreted by William Ellery Channing and James Freeman Clarke. It differs little from the progressive orthodoxy of today. The constituent members of the church were: Joseph Harrington, Sarah F. Dennis, Isaac N. Cunningham, Nancy G. Cunningham, James Cunningham, Sarah M. Cunningham, Samuel Cunningham, Emily C. Cunningham, John Paul, R. B. Paul, W. D. Bradford, Catherine F. Goodhue, Ephraim Wyman, James M. Wight, John R. Kendall, Susan Goodrich.

In December, 1844, steps were taken to secure a place of worship. It was proposed to purchase the unfinished Universalist church, which had been abandoned. Several hundred dollars in subscriptions, conditional and otherwise, were raised, besides a sum for an organ. These subscription lists are still in existence. But the project was not successful. Another unsuccessful effort was made to build in 1846.

December 13, 1845, the Unitarian society was organized at the home of Ephraim Wyman. The trustees chosen were Ephraim Wyman, Thatcher Blake, and Richard Montague.

For a number of years little was done. The church had services whenever a traveling clergyman was available. This condition continued until 1849, when Rev. H. Snow volunteered to strengthen the waste places in this branch of Zion. The Unitarians were not sanguine, and at first Mr. Snow received little encouragement. But a new start was made. The church had hitherto held services in the court house; but now they felt the need of another place. The frame building which had been used by the First Baptist church was for sale. This old edifice may well be called a church cradle. It successively rocked the Baptists, Episcopalians, Unitarians and Presbyterians. It was an illustration of the common origin of all believers who belong to the true household of faith. At this time the Unitarians owned a lot on the northeast corner of Church and Elm streets. They had received two hundred and fifty dollars from the American Unitarian Association, and with this they purchased the old Baptist building, which they removed upon their lot. For about a year Mr. Snow preached two Sundays in the month, and the other Sundays at Belvidere. Mr. Snow invited Rev. A. A. Livermore, who was then at Keene, New Hampshire, to act the generous Christian part by presenting a communion service to the church. The ladies of Mr. Keene's church complied with the request.

Mr. Snow's health failed in the spring of 1850, and he was obliged to resign from his pastorate. He had been faithful in his efforts to lay an enduring foundation. Mr. Snow applied to the American Unitarian Association, and to Dr. Hosmer, an eminent divine and educator, to send a successor. Dr. Hosmer sent John M. Windsor, who had recently graduated from the Unitarian school at Meadville, Pennsylvania. Mr. Windsor devoted his entire attention to the Rockford church, and gave one sermon each Sunday. About this time the accession of Mr. and Mrs. Melancthon Starr inspired the congregation with new energy and courage.

The church enjoyed a fair degree of prosperity for several years. In 1853 it was proposed to build a more comfortable place of worship. A lot was purchased on the corner of Chestnut and Church streets, and generous subscriptions were secured. Mr. Windsor was sent east to solicit contributions from the Unitarians of New York and Massachusetts. Mr. Windsor went to New York early in the spring of 1854 to collect the promised money, and never returned. Work was begun on the new church in the same spring. The plan of the edifice was that of the Episcopal church in Beloit, with some changes and better workmanship.

In the autumn of 1854, when the pulpit had become vacant, the society, through Mr. Starr, began correspondence with John Murray, who had just graduated from Meadville. This gentleman was engaged as a stated supply for six months from the first of October, with a view to a call to the pastorate if it should be mutually agreeable. Mr. Murray began his labors at the time stated. Mr. Crawford, the contractor, had agreed to have the new church ready for occupancy early in October. On the strength of this promise, the old church cradle had been previously sold to the Presbyterians, possession to be given December 1st. The church kept its promise, but the contractor did not; and the services were held in Dr. Haskell's schoolhouse for a time. Before the expiration of the six months Mr. Murray had accepted an invitation to remain a year. Upon the completion of the church, the Rockford Amateurs gave a vocal and instrumental concert in Warner's hall, to aid in its furnishing. About one hundred and fifty dollars were realized. A Unitarian church in Chicago sent two massive chandeliers, pulpit and gallery lamps, a pulpit sofa and a Bible. A melodeon had been previously purchased.



The church was dedicated April 18, 1855. Friends came from Chicago, Geneva and Belvidere. Rev. Rush R. Shippen, of Chicago, preached the dedicatory sermon. On Sunday, May 6th, a Sunday-school was organized, with twenty-five scholars, with Rev. H. Snow as superintendent. On Sunday, July 1st, the Lord's supper was celebrated, after a long interval. In December a new declaration of faith and purpose and articles of organization were adopted.

Rev. John Murray's pastorate closed on the last Sunday in March, 1857. The pulpit was supplied by Rev. Addison Brown, Rev. W. W. King, and Rev. L. B. Watson. The latter two were Universalist clergymen of Chicago.

June 8, 1857, a call to the pastorate was sent to the Rev. Augustus H. Conant, of Geneva, Illinois. Mr. Conant, though highly esteemed in his parish, had given offense to some by his radical utterances against slavery. He therefore promptly accepted the call, at a salary of one thousand dollars, with certain privileges of vacation for missionary work Sunday afternoons during a part of the year. Rev. Conant began his pastoral work July 12, 1857. The congregation then numbered about seventy. He purchased a home of Mr. Cosper, on the corner of Green and West streets, for three thousand and five hundred dollars. This residence is still the home of his daughter, Miss Coretta Conant, and his granddaughter, Miss Louise Conant, instructor in art and history of art at Rockford college.

Mr. Conant enjoyed an extended personal acquaintance among distinguished representatives of the Unitarian faith, and other cotemporaries. Among these were William Ellery Channing, Theodore Parker, James Freeman Clarke, Horace Greeley, O. B. Frothingham, Margaret Fuller, Fred Douglass, and Robert Collyer. Among Rev. Conant's guests at his Rockford home were Ralph Waldo Emerson, Prof. Youmans, Bayard Taylor, Tom Corwin, John Pierpont, and T. Starr King. James Freeman Clarke, in his Autobiography, refers to Rev. Conant as a "saint and an apostle."

Augustus Hammond Conant was born October 16, 1811, at Brandon, Vermont. When a young man he left his native state and settled as a farmer on the Des Plaines river, in Cook county, Illinois. His parents were members of the Baptist church, and he was baptized into that fellowship before he came to Illinois. One day he entered the store of the Clarke Brothers, in Chicago, where he saw a copy of the *Western Messenger*. He became

interested in the paper, and he was given several copies to take home. These Clarkes owned a book-store in Chicago, and were brothers of James Freeman Clarke, who was then the editor of the *Messenger*. Upon reading these papers, Mr. Conant resolved to consecrate his life to the ministry. Mr. Conant kept a journal of his daily life as a pioneer farmer from January 1, 1836, to the latter part of May, 1840. It presents in brief a vivid picture of life on the frontier, as lived by an ambitious young man who was obliged to make his own way in the world, and at the same time prepare himself for the ministry. Brief quotations will tell the story. Under date of September 28, 1836, and later, he writes: "Worked at shoemaking; made a coffin for H. Dougherty; plastered my house; dressed pig and calves torn by wolves; dug a well; killed a badger; killed a wolf; corn half destroyed by blackbirds; set out shade trees; read Cowper; took up a bee-tree to hive for honey; hunted a deer; snow a foot deep; attended a Christmas party."

Mr. Conant returned east May 25, 1840, and began study at the Cambridge divinity school, under Prof. Henry Ware, Jr. After finishing his course Mr. Conant began his ministry in 1841 at Geneva, Illinois, where he preached sixteen years. A pamphlet entitled *Fifty Years of Unitarian Life*, gives a pleasant picture of Mr. Conant's pastoral life at Geneva. The pamphlet is a record of the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Unitarian church at Geneva. His journal kept during this time is a revelation of the man and of his time. Under date of January 7, 1842, and later, he writes: "Read Neander; made a chair; worked on a sermon; drew straw; Read Neander; horse died; mended a pump; read Bushnell; read the Methodist discipline; helped my wife to wash; worked on a sermon; made benches for the school; finished sermon; made soap."

The church at Rockford prospered under Mr. Conant's ministry for a time. He was a man of high ideals and noble enthusiasms, and was filled with the missionary spirit. Rev. Robert Collyer said of him: "He was as quick to leap to the appeal of a crippled cobbler, and as strong to save him, as if the Master had come out of heaven to bid him do it, and had told him he should have for his deed an endless renown, and the praises of all the choirs of heaven." But there came a serious declension in the financial and numerical strength of the church. In July, 1861, the reliable income of the society had fallen to four hundred dollars a year, and six months' salary was due the pastor.



Some of the former members had removed from the city, and others had been overtaken with financial reverses. Under these circumstances, Mr. Conant tendered his resignation to take effect the first Sunday in July, 1861.

The civil war had now begun, and Mr. Conant enlisted in his country's service immediately after his resignation. He went to the front as a chaplain in the Nineteenth Illinois volunteer infantry. Among the privates of this regiment was Thomas G. Lawler. Mr. Conant had some controversy while in camp at Elizabethtown, Kentucky, with Dwight L. Moody, who had been sent out by the Young Men's Christian Association of Chicago. At Nashville, February 8, 1863, Mr. Conant passed from earth to "bathe his weary soul in seas of heavenly rest." His death was due to exposure and over-exertion at the battle of Murfreesborough. His death was universally lamented. He was one of those rare souls whom every one loved, and who had never incurred an unkind feeling from any one. At his death a soldier in the ranks paid him this tribute: "The brave and noble chaplain, who never turned aside for bullet or shell, but where balls flew thick and fast sought out the wounded and ministered to their wants, is dead. Never while I live can I forget him as I saw him on the field, with his red flag suspended on a ramrod, marching fearlessly to the relief of the suffering; appearing to the wounded like a ministering angel. When we said, 'Chaplain, you must rest or you will die,' he always replied, 'I cannot rest, boys, while you suffer; if I die, I will die helping you.'" His remains were buried at Geneva, and Rev. Robert Collyer, then of Chicago, preached the funeral discourse. Dr. Collyer subsequently wrote a biography of Mr. Conant, with the title, *A Man in Earnest*. Mrs. Conant died March 20, 1898, in her eightieth year. Her remains were taken to Geneva for interment.

After Mr. Conant's resignation, services were maintained with some regularity; but the church gradually declined. Fred May Holland began pastoral labors January 4, 1863. Differences arose. The conservative element became dissatisfied with the pastor on account of his radical or "Parkerite" tendencies. Mr. Holland was succeeded by William G. Nowell, who was ordained April 14, 1864. Mr. Nowell left the church in June, 1865. The last pastor was Rev. D. M. Reed, a very scholarly gentleman. Mr. Reed wished some recognition of his denomination in the name of the church. In accordance with his request, the name



was changed to the United Unitarian and Universalist church. The name, however, in legal matters was simply Unitarian. The church was subsequently sold, and in 1890 the proceeds were divided pro rata among the original subscribers. The late Melancthon Starr was known to have contributed four thousand dollars. Many of the members of the church united with the Church of the Christian Union, and others became identified with the Second Congregational church. The old church was last used as a furniture warehouse.

The history of American Unitarianism has been unique. Its birthplace was Boston, and the time about 1812. It was a natural reaction from the stern Calvinistic theology. The golden age of American letters was cotemporary with the rise of Unitarianism. Its influence in literature is attested by the names of Channing, Margaret Fuller, Alcott, Dwight, Elizabeth Peabody and Emerson. In criticism are the names of Whipple, Ripley, Ticknor and Lowell. In history are Palfrey, Bancroft, Prescott and Motley. In statesmanship and oratory are the elder and the younger Adams, Daniel Webster, Edward Everett, Charles Sumner, and George William Curtis. In poetry there are Bryant, Lowell, Longfellow and Holmes. Notwithstanding this remarkable list of men and women of genius, the Unitarian church has always been weak in numbers. In Chicago there are only three churches, while there are more than one hundred of the Methodist faith. The Unitarian church has been a leavening rather than an original constructive force. It has not been too intellectual, but it has been too exclusively intellectual. The final test of a religious faith or creed is its inherent spiritual energy. The dynamic force of religion is devotion to a Person. Perchance the contribution of Unitarianism to religious history is in its illustration of the truth that the purest religion is not merely a system of ethics, however noble; but an enthusiasm, a passion. Many Unitarian leaders have realized this truth, although the rank and file of the laity have not done so. In integrity and high character, the Unitarian church of Rockford was a worthy representative of Unitarianism; but it shared the fate of many of its sister churches.

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

### EARLY ELECTIONS.—POLITICAL REMINISCENCES.

UNDER the first constitution of Illinois, the commissioners, sheriff and coroner were the only constitutional county officers. The latter two were elected every two years. The other county officers were created by statute. They were filled by appointment made either by the county commissioners' court or by the governor. Previous to 1835 a recorder for each county was appointed by the governor; and a surveyor was chosen by the commissioners' court. The statute of 1835 made these officers elective on the first Monday in August of that year, and every fourth year thereafter. Previous to 1837 county treasurers and clerks of the commissioners' courts were appointed by said courts. An act approved February 7th of that year made these offices elective on the first Monday in the following August, on a corresponding day in 1839, and in every fourth year thereafter. Up to 1837 a judge of probate was appointed for each county by the legislature. An act of March 4th made this office elective, with the title of probate justice of the peace, on the first Monday in August of that year, on a corresponding date in 1839, and in every fourth year thereafter. Under an act approved February 27, 1845, the tenure of office of probate justice of the peace, recorder, clerk of the county commissioners' court, surveyor and treasurer was reduced to two years. This law took effect on the first Monday in August, 1847. Under the constitution of 1848 the term of office of the county and circuit clerks was extended to four years.

August 1, 1836, occurred the first general election in Winnebago county. The choice of county officers was given in a preceding chapter. On that day there were also elected a member of congress and two representatives in the state legislature. Under the apportionment of 1831 the state was divided into three congressional districts. In 1836 the third district, which included Winnebago county, extended from the Wisconsin boundary to a line below Springfield, and entirely across the state

from east to west. The northern half of the state was sparsely settled, and comprised one congressional district. At the first election in this county William L. May, the Democratic candidate for congress, received seventy-three votes, and John T. Stuart, forty-four votes; a majority for May of twenty-nine votes. Mr. May was elected and served two years. His home was at Springfield.

Previous to 1840 the senatorial district of which Winnebago formed a part, included the entire Rock river valley, as well as a large tract below the mouth of Rock river. This vast area, extending from Dubuque almost to St. Louis, was entitled to one senator and two representatives in the legislature. The first election in Winnebago county for representatives resulted as follows: John Turner, seventy-four votes; Charles R. Bennett, seventy-three; Elijah Charles, thirty-four; James Craig, forty; L. H. Bowen, eight. James Craig and Elijah Charles were elected.

Under an early statute, presidential elections in Illinois were held on the first Monday in November. At the presidential election in 1836, only one hundred and fifty-eight votes were polled. This was an increase over the August election of thirty-eight votes. The Harrison electors received seventy votes, and the Van Buren electors, eighty-eight; a Democratic majority of eighteen.

In 1837 Harvey W. Bundy was elected recorder, to succeed Daniel H. Whitney, of Belvidere, who had become a resident of the new county of Boone. Herman B. Potter was elected county commissioner to succeed Simon P. Doty, of Belvidere. Charles I. Horsman was elected probate justice of the peace. Milton Kilburn had served as judge of probate the preceding year, under appointment. Nathaniel Loomis was chosen clerk of the commissioners' court; Robert J. Cross was elected county treasurer.

At the general August election in 1838, John T. Stuart, of Springfield, was the Whig candidate for member of congress. His Democratic opponent was Stephen A. Douglas, who was also of Springfield. Mr. Stuart received a majority of ninety-three in Winnebago county, and was elected. Mr. Stuart was perhaps the first prominent man to recognize the genius of Abraham Lincoln, and by the loan of books he had encouraged him to study law. Mr. Lincoln, after his admission to the bar in 1837, became the law partner of his benefactor. When Mr.



Stuart began to receive political honors, he necessarily gave less attention to his profession. Thus the conduct of the business largely devolved upon Mr. Lincoln.

Winnebago county forged so rapidly to the front that in 1838 it was conceded one of the representatives in the general assembly, and Germanicus Kent was elected. Hon. James Craig was re-elected. Isaac N. Cunningham was elected sheriff of the county; Cyrus C. Jenks, coroner; Don Alonzo Spaulding, surveyor; Elijah H. Brown, commissioner.

In 1839 William E. Dunbar was elected recorder; and John Emerson, surveyor.

The presidential campaign of 1840 was one of the most exciting in American political history. The hero of Tippecanoe was the idol of his party, and no leader ever received a more enthusiastic support. Winnebago county had now become a Whig stronghold, and the party waged an aggressive campaign against the Loco-Focos, as the Democrats were then called. April 11th the Whigs held a convention at Rockford, and nominated a full county ticket. Among the local leaders of this party were Selden M. Church, Jacob Miller, H. B. Potter, G. A. Sanford, Isaac N. Cunningham. Democratic principles were championed by Jason Marsh, Daniel S. Haight, Henry Thurston, P. Knappen, J. C. Goodhue, H. W. Loomis, C. I. Horsman. Boone county had been organized from the eastern portion of Winnebago, and the western two ranges had been transferred to Stephenson. In the August elections the Whigs polled six hundred and thirty-seven votes, and the Democrats, two hundred and eighty-five. The total vote was nine hundred and twenty-two, with a Whig majority of three hundred and fifty-two. Thomas Drummond, of Jo Daviess, and Hiram Thornton, of Mercer, both Whigs, carried the county by good majorities for representative, and were elected. I. N. Cunningham was elected sheriff; Alonzo Platt, coroner; and Ezra S. Cable, commissioner.

The presidential campaign overshadowed local issues. Mr. Thurston, in his *Reminiscences*, gives this interesting sketch of the stirring incidents of that year: "The sparseness of the population, the limited amount accessible of the current literature of the day, to which some of the settlers had been accustomed; the almost entire deprivation of the pleasures of social life among the older people, caused them to enter into a political or local contest with a vim which almost invariably became

personal before it was decided. When the fight was ended, the passions cooled down, and 'sober second thought' had resumed its sway, it frequently happened that both parties joined in a general pow-wow and celebration. It was so in 1840. The Whigs of this locality imitated the tactics so successfully practiced throughout the union. They had no cider, either hard or sweet, but they did possess in abundance all the paraphernalia used by the party in the populous parts of the country. They put up a log cabin in regular pioneer style, on the southeast corner of State and Madison streets, for political headquarters, profusely decorated with coon-skins and other regalia pertaining to the times; imported speakers from Galena, Chicago and intervening points; got up processions, and with Frank Parker blowing an E flat bugle, and China Parker a clarionet—neither of them having the slightest knowledge of music, and each blowing with might and main in a vain effort to drown out his companion—marched about the village wherever they could secure a following. The village drum was in possession of the Democrats, and consequently not available for Whig celebrations."

Jacob Miller was the most popular among the local Whig orators. He was familiar with the vernacular of the westerner, and drew his illustrations from their daily life. At the close of a harangue he would sometimes produce his fiddle and scrape the "Arkansas Traveler." The whole assembly joined in a general break-down, and the orator of the day was borne in triumph on the shoulders of his friends to the nearest bar.

The presidential election occurred in November. The Whigs cast seven hundred and sixty-eight votes in the county, and the Democrats, three hundred and twenty-one; total, one thousand and eighty-nine; Whig majority, four hundred and forty-seven. Abraham Lincoln was one of the five Whig candidates for presidential elector in Illinois. The facilities for communication were so meagre that the official vote of the state was not known in Rockford until late in December. A messenger from the capital, with the official vote of the state, passed through Rockford ten days in advance of its publication in the Chicago papers, and communicated, it is said, the news to the prominent men of the Democratic party, in each village, for betting purposes. Illinois was one of the seven states that elected Van Buren electors. This vote may have been intentionally kept back by the Democratic officials at Springfield.



Through a technicality in an alleged non-compliance with the law, the legality of Mr. Cunningham's election to the office of sheriff in August was questioned; and he again appealed to the voters at the November election, and received an emphatic endorsement.

The *Rock River Express* of December 4th published this advertisement in display type: "For Salt River, the steamboat Van Buren, only four years old, will leave on the 4th of March next, for Salt River. For freight or passage, apply to the White House. Hypocrites will be in attendance to amuse the passengers free of charge." The local campaign closed with a "Harrison ball," at the Washington House, February 9, 1841. On the evening of March 3d the Democrats gave a Van Buren ball "in honor of the able and enlightened administration of Martin Van Buren."

April 4, 1841, just one month after his inauguration, President Harrison suddenly died. The event filled the country with sorrow. At a meeting of the citizens held in Rockford on the 19th, a committee, which represented both political parties, was chosen to submit resolutions on the death of the president to a mass-meeting of the citizens. These resolutions were unanimously adopted.

In the spring of 1841 a bitter local fight was made on the election of justices of the peace in Rockford precinct. The candidates were Dr. Haskell, Peter H. Watson and John T. Shaler. Two justices were to be elected; but to satisfy all aspirants, it was proposed to elect later a third justice for the precinct. The business did not require another justice, but it was thought such an arrangement would be politically convenient. The court, however, held that the election of Mr. Watson was illegal, and no third justice was ever elected in the precinct.

A congressional election was held in August, 1841, instead of the preceding year. The candidates were John T. Stuart and J. H. Ralston. Winnebago county cast four hundred and ninety-three votes for the former, and two hundred and twenty-three for the latter. Mr. Stuart was re-elected. William Hulin was elected county commissioner.

In 1842 Judge Thomas Ford was elected governor by the Democrats. That party in Winnebago county nominated the following ticket: Senator for Winnebago and Ogle counties, James Mitchell; for representative, John A. Brown, editor of the *Rockford Pilot*; sheriff, John Paul; commissioner, Spencer



Post; coroner, Nathaniel Loomis. The Whigs nominated Spooner Ruggles for senator; George W. Lee, representative; G. A. Sanford, sheriff; Isaac M. Johnson, commissioner; Harvey Gregory, coroner. Mr. Lee withdrew, and Darius Adams, of Pecatonica, was substituted. The official vote of the county for senator, representative and sheriff was as follows: Ruggles, four hundred and sixty-nine; Mitchell, four hundred and ninety; Adams, five hundred and forty; Brown, three hundred and seventy-six; Sanford, five hundred and fifty-nine; Paul, one hundred and twelve. Spooner Ruggles, Darius Adams, Spencer Post, G. A. Sanford and Nathaniel Loomis were elected to the respective offices.

By the act of March 1, 1843, the state was divided into seven congressional districts. The first election under this apportionment was held on the first Monday in August of the same year. Under this apportionment, Winnebago and Hancock counties were in the sixth district. Hancock county was the seat of the Mormon settlement, under the leadership of Joseph Smith. The Mormons generally voted the Democratic ticket; and with their support, Joseph Hogue, of Galena, was elected member of congress. His Whig opponent was Cyrus Walker, of McDonough county. At the county election Ezra S. Cable was elected commissioner; William Hulin, recorder; S. M. Church, clerk; Bela Shaw, probate justice; Ephraim Wyman, treasurer; Volney A. Marsh, school commissioner; Duncan Ferguson, surveyor.

The presidential election of 1844 was scarcely less exciting than that of four years previous. The Whigs carried the county for Henry Clay, the idol of the party. The Whig ticket received five hundred and forty-six votes; the Democratic, three hundred and sixty-eight; a majority of one hundred and seventy-eight for Mr. Clay. In August Mr. Hogue was re-elected member of congress, over Martin P. Sweet, of Freeport. The Rockford *Forum* of August 14th denounced the apportionment act, which placed the Mormon stronghold in this district, and thus legislated it into the Democratic ranks. Anson S. Miller was elected member of the legislature; Anson Barnum, sheriff; Artemas Hitchcock, coroner.

In 1846 Thomas J. Turner, of Freeport, Democrat, was elected member of congress over James Knox, of Knox county. Wait Talcott received two hundred and twenty-six votes as the candidate of the Liberty party. Anson S. Miller, of Winnebago,

was elected state senator as a Whig; Robert J. Cross, representative; Hiram R. Maynard, sheriff; and Artemas Hitchcock, coroner.

After the Mormons removed from Hancock county the district again became Whig, and in 1848 the party elected Edward D. Baker, of Galena, member of congress. Colonel Baker was born in London, England, February 24, 1811. He came to the United States at the age of five years, with his father, who died in Philadelphia. The son removed to Springfield, Illinois. He arose rapidly to distinction, and in 1844 he was elected a member of congress. He served his adopted country with signal ability in the Mexican war; and upon his return to Illinois he settled at Galena. After serving one term in congress, he settled in San Francisco, California, in 1852. Colonel Baker was a brilliant orator. His speech on the death of Senator Broderick, of California, who fell in a duel with Judge Terry, in 1859, is one of the masterpieces of American oratory. For an hour the homage of tears was paid to Baker's genius and to Broderick's memory. His closing words are remarkable for their noble pathos: "The last word must be spoken, and the imperious mandate of death must be fulfilled. Thus, O brave heart! we lay thee to thy rest. Thus, surrounded by tens of thousands, we leave thee to thy equal grave. As in life no other voice among us so rang its trumpet blast upon the ears of freemen, so in death its echoes will reverberate amidst our mountains and our valleys until truth and valor cease to appeal to the human heart. Good friend! true hero! hail and farewell!"

Colonel Baker was subsequently elected United States senator from Oregon. His debate with Breckinridge in the senate in 1861 attracted national attention. "In the history of the senate," says Mr. Blaine, "no more thrilling speech was ever delivered. The striking appearance of the speaker, in the uniform of a soldier, his superb voice, his graceful manner, all united to give to the occasion an extraordinary interest and attraction." Colonel Baker left his seat in the senate and entered military service. He was killed while commanding a brigade at the battle of Ball's Bluff, October 21, 1861.

In 1850, Thompson Campbell, of Galena, was elected member of congress. At the same time Richard S. Molony, of Belvidere, was elected to represent the adjoining eastern district, which then included Chicago.

## CHAPTER XL.

### LEWIS KENT: THE ONLY SLAVE IN THE COUNTY.

THE Northwest Territory had been consecrated to freedom by the Ordinance of 1787. This principle was reaffirmed by the first constitution of Illinois. When the state had become a member of the union, however, and was thus given control over its own internal affairs, a desperate effort was made to introduce slavery. This effort was partially successful, and the famous "Black Laws" gave the commonwealth an odious reputation at one time.

Only one man ever lived in Winnebago county as a slave. His name was Lewis Kent, although he was more familiarly known as Lewis Lemon. In 1829, when Germanicus Kent was a citizen of Alabama, he purchased of Orrin Lemon a colored boy named Lewis. He was born in North Carolina, and had been taken by his master to Alabama. He was about seventeen years old at the time he was sold to Mr. Kent for four hundred and fifty dollars in cash. When Mr. Kent decided to remove north, he proposed to sell Lewis; but the colored man preferred his old master. Mr. Kent made an agreement with Lewis when they arrived at St. Louis. It was in substance that Lewis should pay him for his freedom at the expiration of six years and seven months, the sum of eight hundred dollars, with ten per cent. interest. Lewis obtained his freedom, however, in four years and four months. On the 6th of September, 1839, Mr. Kent executed and placed in the hands of Lewis a deed of manumission. At a session of the county commissioners' court held in March, 1842, Mr. Kent filed for record the instrument which officially proclaimed Lewis Kent a free man. The transcript of this document, which is on file in the county clerk's office, is the only evidence in Rockford of the existence of slavery, and that one of its victims here found freedom and a home. The following is the text of this document:

Be it remembered that at the present term, March, A. D. 1842, of the county of Winnebago, state of Illinois, Lewis Lemon, a free man of color, presented the evidence of his being



a free man by the following writing of Germanicus Kent, of said county, which being duly acknowledged by him, is ordered to be filed and entered on record :

*To all to whom these presents shall come,* GREETING : That whereas the undersigned, Germanicus Kent, of Rockford, Illinois, did in the year A. D. 1829, being then a resident of the state of Alabama, purchase of Orrin D. Lemon, since deceased, a colored boy named Lewis, then about seventeen years of age, as a slave for life ; and whereas, upon the removal of the undersigned, from said state of Alabama, to said state of Illinois ; now this is to certify that said Lewis by my removing him to said state of Illinois, and his residence there ever since, did become free and emancipated from all services due to me as a slave, and that he is, and by right ought to be, free forever hereafter. And this is to further certify that said Lewis was born a slave of said Orrin D. Lemon, then residing in Wake county (N. C.) from whence he removed to Madison county, Alabama, where I purchased said Lewis of him. The said Lewis is aged about twenty-seven years ; in person he is five feet, eight inches high, well built, rather stout, and weighs about one hundred and seventy pounds ; his features are good, dark yellow complexion, open and frank countenance, mouth prominent and large lips.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal at Rockford, Illinois, this sixth day of September, A. D. 1839.

[SEAL.]

GERMANICUS KENT.

In presence of W. E. Dunbar and William Hulin.

State of Illinois, Winnebago county, ss : This day before me, Selden M. Church, clerk of the county commissioners' court of the said county, came Germanicus Kent, known to me to be the real person described, and who executed the within instrument of writing, and acknowledged that he executed the same for the uses and purposes therein expressed.

Given under my hand and private seal (there being no official seal provided) at Rockford, this 11th day of March, A. D. 1842.

[SEAL.]

SELDEN M. CHURCH,

*Clerk County Commissioners' Court Winnebago Co.*

After his manumission Lewis obtained some land, and earned his livelihood by the cultivation of garden produce. He died in September, 1877. His funeral was attended by members of the Old Settlers' Society.

## CHAPTER XLI.

### THE POLISH CLAIMS.—DELAY IN OBTAINING LAND PATENTS.

EVENTS of local interest occasionally have their historic background in national and even international affairs. A notable instance was the celebrated Polish claims made in 1836 to a portion of the territory which now comprises the townships of Rockford and Rockton. It is one of the most interesting chapters in the history of Winnebago county. Local histories have briefly referred to the incident, but no complete statement of the affair has previously been written.

The checkered career of Poland furnishes the historic background. The reader of history will recall the Polish rebellion of 1830–31. Previous to that time her territory had been partitioned between Russia and other powers. The impulse to this uprising of 1830 was given by the French, and was begun by a number of students, who proposed to seize the Grand Duke Constantine in the vicinity of Warsaw. The city and the troops enlisted in the movement, under the command of General Chlopicki, a veteran of the wars of Napoleon. Upon the suppression of this uprising in the following year, the leaders were sent into exile. They naturally sought refuge in this country.

The forlorn condition of these exiles enlisted the sympathy of the American people, and congress rendered them some assistance. An act was approved June 30, 1834, which granted to these Polish exiles, two hundred and thirty-five in number, who had been transported to this country by the order of the emperor of Austria, thirty-six sections of land. These sections were to be selected by them, under the direction of the secretary of the treasury, in any three adjacent townships of the public lands, surveyed or unsurveyed, in the state of Illinois or the territory of Michigan. After this land had been surveyed, it became the duty of the secretary of the treasury to divide the thirty-six sections into equal parts, and to distribute them by lot among the exiles. They were to reside upon and cultivate these lands for ten years, and at the expiration of this time they were to obtain their patents upon the payment of the minimum price per acre.



The exiles arrived in America in 1835, and their committee, at the head of whom was Count Chlopicki, arrived in Rockford in the autumn of the following year. The Count was an elderly gentleman, well informed, and apparently an excellent judge of land. Upon his arrival in the Rock river valley, he selected townships forty-four and forty-six, range one east. These are Rockford and Rockton. The intervening township of Owen was not taken, and thus was violated one of the provisions of the grant, which stipulated that the land should be selected in three adjacent townships.

Much of this land was already in possession of American citizens when the Count arrived upon the scene. They had only a squatter's title, inasmuch as there was then no pre-emption law that would apply in this case, and the government had not placed the land upon the market. The settlers had enclosed their farms and made such improvements as they were able. Moreover, the several Indian "floats" in these townships might have precedence over the claims of settlers or exiles. But these facts did not disturb the plans of the doughty Count. He disregarded the squatter rights of the settlers, and made a formal selection of their land, and reported his choice to the secretary of the treasury.

While in this section Count Chlopicki had been a guest of Germanicus Kent. That gentleman explained the situation to his visitor, and the latter declared that the settlers should not be disturbed. He thus set their fears at rest in a measure. But these assurances were not entirely satisfactory, and after the Count's departure a sum of money was raised and Mr. Kent was sent to Washington to make further inquiry. The anxiety of the settlers was increased by the fact, as already stated, that they held no titles to the land upon which they had settled. Upon Mr. Kent's arrival in Washington, he found that his apprehensions were well founded. The Count had not kept his word; he had chosen the very townships he had promised Mr. Kent he would not select. Mr. Kent went directly to the land office and made his complaint before the commissioner; but he was told that every settler in the county was a trespasser, and that he had no legal right to a foot of the land which he had so unceremoniously taken. It is said facts are stubborn things. Mr. Kent and the settlers knew that the commissioner was correct, but they did not become alarmed. Perhaps they thought that in union there was strength. The secretary of the treasury



did not, however, order the subdivision of the lands, because their selection by the Polish agent was not in compliance with the law, and thus the matter rested for some years.

The selection of these lands by the Polish agent, while squatter's possession was held by the settlers, complicated the whole question of titles. The settlers had certain rights in equity, but inasmuch as no pre-emption law was then in force that would bear upon the case, the government did not at that time formally recognize their claims. In view of this fact, it is not a matter of surprise that the Polish count, in his desire to select good lands for his exiled countrymen, should disregard claims that the government did not recognize. Moreover, this section of the Rock river valley had been framed in the prodigality of nature. Its soil was good, its atmosphere invigorating, its scenery a perpetual delight. The possession of such land always promotes domestic happiness and commercial strength.

The lands in this vicinity belonged at that time to the Galena land district, and with the exception of Rockford and Rockton, were opened to sale and entry in the autumn of 1839. These townships, which included the thirty-six sections in controversy, were withheld from sale for nearly eight years after they had been surveyed.

Matters continued in this unsettled condition until 1843. In the meantime the land office had been removed to Dixon, through the influence of John Dixon, who settled there in 1830, and after whom the town was named. In 1840 Mr. Dixon went to Washington, and through the influence of General Scott and other army officers, who were his personal friends, he secured the removal of the government land office from Galena to Dixon. The settlers in Rockford and Rockton could not procure patents of the lands which they had occupied for some years. The attention of congress was repeatedly called to the situation. The settlers addressed petitions to that body until their grievance received attention. The Polish agent had forfeited his claim in not selecting his lands in three adjacent townships. The exiles had also forfeited their rights in not making an actual settlement on the lands. Congress therefore, April 14, 1842, passed another act, authorizing the entry and sale of these lands in these two townships. This relief was due in large measure to the efforts of Hon. O. H. Smith, of Indiana, Hon. Robert J. Walker, of Mississippi, and Hon. Richard M. Young, of this state, senators in congress.

When the settlers had been finally delivered from their dilemma by a special act of congress, they began to make preparations to perfect their titles to their lands. The inhabitants petitioned the president for a public sale. Fifteen months elapsed before their petition was granted, and October 30, 1843, the land in these townships was offered for sale, and was sold November 3d. It was the most notable land sale that ever occurred in the district. Rockford had been incorporated as a town four years before. Daniel S. Haight had platted the East side, north of State as far east as Longwood, and south of State east to Kishwaukee. A portion of this had been platted as early as 1836; and Mr. Haight had sold the lots to the settlers and given them quit-claim deeds to the same several years before he had obtained his own patent from the government. When the land was finally offered for sale at the land office, Mr. Haight was authorized to go to Dixon and bid in the entire tract for the settlers. A committee, appointed for this purpose, prepared a list of names to whom the deeds should be given after the sale. This committee consisted of Willard Wheeler, David S. Penfield, E. H. Potter, of Rockford, and Nathaniel Crosby, of Belvidere. This committee was in session several days, passed upon every lot in the town on the East side, and decided quite a number of disputed claims. Mr. Crosby was not present, but it was understood that a majority should have power to act. Thus a number of the first settlers of East Rockford purchased their land twice. The first purchase, of town lots, was from Mr. Haight; the second was made through Mr. Haight as agent, from the general government. Inasmuch, however, as the land office took no notice of the fact that the land had been platted, it was sold at the usual price of a dollar and a quarter per acre. The second purchase was therefore more of a formality than an additional burden. With the land sold in bulk, at a dollar and a quarter per acre, the second purchase of a town lot, from the government, was at a nominal price, merely its relative value to an unplatted acre of land. This second purchase, however, perfected the title.

At this point it may be necessary to state that Mr. Haight's first sales of land were perfectly legitimate transactions. The purchasers knew at the time that a second purchase would be necessary to procure a perfect title. There was recently found among some old papers of the late Francis Burnap a list of the town lots in East Rockford and the names of the persons to



whom the deeds should be given after the land sale. The document comprises seventeen pages of legal cap, and is perfectly preserved. At the same sale at Dixon the land on the west side of the river was bid in for the settlers by Ephraim Wyman. The West side committee was composed of G. A. Sanford, Derastus Harper, and George Haskell. The certificates of title were turned over to Mr. Wyman by the committee. When Mr. Wyman went to California, about 1850, these certificates were left in a trunk, in charge of G. A. Sanford. During Mr. Wyman's absence they were totally destroyed by rodents; and these facts are set forth with grave precision by Mr. Wyman, in a certificate, duplicates of which are on file in the abstract offices of the city.

¶ Thus for a period of nine years from Mr. Kent's settlement were the early residents of Rockford and Rockton unable to obtain titles to the lands which they had selected and improved, by reason of the illegal intrusion of an exiled Polish count. The sequel is one of those facts that is stranger than fiction. Only one of those exiles ever subsequently appeared in Rockford or Winnebago county. He was employed for a time as a cook, in 1837, by Henry Thurston, the landlord of the old Rockford House. The later history of the exiles is unknown. 11

Mr. Haight's plat of East Rockford was filed for record November 7, 1843, four days after the land sale. The east part of the original town of Rockford, west of Rock river, included all that part of the city lying south of a line drawn from the Beattie residence west to the Horsman estate, and east of a line drawn from the latter point to the west end of the Chicago & Northwestern railroad bridge. It was platted by Duncan Ferguson, November 9, 1843, and filed for record by Ephraim Wyman, November 28, 1843.

J. W. Leavitt's town plat included all that part of West Rockford situated between Wyman's plat on the east, and Kent's creek on the west and south. This plat was made August 17, 1844, and filed for record October 5, 1844.



## CHAPTER XLII.

### PIONEERS IN LOCAL JOURNALISM.

THE first newspaper published in the county was the *Rock River Express*. Its publication began in Rockford May 5, 1840, by B. J. Gray. In politics it was Whig of the most radical type. There was a scarcity of local news. In a village of perhaps three hundred inhabitants, there was very little of a local nature that could be published. The primary purpose of the paper's existence seems to have been to promote the election of William Henry Harrison to the presidency. Its ambition was satisfied; but after it had been published one year, the press and printing material were sold and removed from the village. A file of this paper, nearly complete, has been preserved in the public library.

The Rockford *Star* was founded in the autumn of 1840, as a Democratic paper. The printing material was owned by Daniel S. Haight, Daniel Howell, and Adam Keith. The office was located on the southeast corner of Madison and Market streets, in the building erected by Mr. Haight, for religious, court and other purposes. This old building still shelters one of the craft, William G. Conick, on North First street. The editor, Philander Knappen, was simply a tenant. J. H. Thurston was the "devil" in the office, a role which, according to his own statement, he was eminently qualified to fill. He also became quite an expert compositor. Mr. Thurston subsequently obtained employment on John Wentworth's paper, the Chicago *Democrat*, on the strength of a letter of Mr. Knappen, to the effect that he was a rapid compositor, could set a clean proof, and could sometimes make sense from Knappen's own manuscript.

April 28, 1841, the editor of the *Star* was married to Miss Eliza Simons, of Harlem. Mr. Knappen extended a general invitation to his friends through his paper to attend a social party in the evening at the Rockford House. This unique invitation was in part as follows: "To all our friends, without respect to political sentiments. . . . We anticipate the pleasure and honor of meeting a respectable representation of our friends, both Whig and Democrat (for there are no party prin-

ciples involved in matrimony), from Newburg, Belvidere, Kishwaukee, Harlem, Winnebago, Roscoe, Pekatonik, Beloit and *all* the surrounding vicinity. We had intended to issue a card on this occasion, but on more mature reflection we thought it possible that some persons might be overlooked, and thus we have the appearance of making flesh of one and fish of another. As we are no 'respector of persons,' and wish the notice and invitation to be general, we have chosen to give notice through both the *Express* and *Star*." Mr. Knappen had sent a special invitation to "Long John" Wentworth to be present. Mr. Wentworth had already started on one of his frequent trips to Rockford; and he expressed his congratulations by following the bride and groom all the evening with a tallow dip in his extended hand, which reached nearly to the ceiling.

Mr. Knappen had been in Rockford but a short time when the Driscoll tragedy occurred. He did not understand the temper of the people; and his strong denunciation of the summary execution of the outlaws aroused intense indignation. The citizens proceeded to punish the editor. Soon after the issue of the paper the office of the *Star* was entered in the night and the type reduced to pi. When the editor beheld this "wreck of matter," he stirred the pi with a stove shovel, and mixed the fonts of type in every case in the office. Mr. Knappen turned over the subscription list to Mr. Howell, of the Rockford House, where the office force boarded, and abandoned journalism in this unappreciative village. Mr. Howell did not realize anything from the assets placed in his hands. Thirty years later Mr. Thurston divulged the fact that D. S. Haight, Charles Latimer and Adam Keith were the perpetrators of this mischief. The Democratic luminary had been side-tracked in its orbit.

The Rockford *Pilot* began its brief career July 22, 1841. Mr. Thurston says he helped distribute the *Star* pi, and with this material assisted in issuing the first four numbers of its successor. The *Pilot* was published as a Democratic paper until October, 1842; it could no longer steer clear of the rocks. The editor, John A. Brown, had been defeated for representative; the Democrats had sustained a local defeat of their entire ticket; and on the 30th of October he published the following requiem: "With this number the *Pilot* dies. Its death is a natural and quiet one. No violence from enemies or overburdening by friends has hastened its dissolution. It dies from the want of proper support. In a land groaning under the burthens of



superabundant harvests, and smiling in the light of the richest blessings of a bounteous Providence, it died of *want*. . . Grief is not wordy, and its requiem must be chanted by others. To the friends who assisted it in life we tender our heart-warm thanks. We are not conscious that it had any enemies; if it had, in its name we forgive them all."

During a portion of this time the *Better Covenant*, a Universalist paper, was printed at the *Pilot* office. Its editor was William Rounseville.

February 17, 1843, J. Ambrose Wight began the publication of the *Winnebago Forum*, a Whig paper, with material which had been used in printing the *Rockford Star*. Mr. Wight came from New York. He attended the academy at Bennington, Vermont; and among his classmates were Henry Ward Beecher, and Rev. E. H. Chapin, the eminent Universalist divine. Mr. Wight was graduated from Williams college in 1836, and immediately thereafter he removed to Illinois. His first visit to Winnebago county was December 11, 1836, in company with Timothy Wight, of Chicago. Mr. Wight thus refers in a letter to that time: "Rockford had not arrived. . . I remember that there was a beginning of the 'Rockford House,' but the building had gone no further than a cellar, and some timbers hewed and lying on the ground." Mr. Wight proceeded to Rockton, where he was interested in a general store until 1840, when he engaged in farming for a time. Mr. Wight says of his life in that village: "I had not gotten to be very rich in goods at Rockton; but I did get a wife there. . . She was the oldest daughter of Rev. William M. Adams, who died in March, 1842, at Mineral Point." In 1841 Mr. Wight came to Rockford, and read law with his brother, James M. Wight; in the summer of 1842 he was admitted to the bar and began practice. He served a short time as deputy postmaster under S. M. Church, in 1842.

Mr. Wight retired from the *Forum* August 18, 1843, when he sold the paper to Mr. Colton. The terms were easy. Mr. Wight said: "He asked me my price. I told him if he would take it off my hands, we would be square." In April, 1844, Mr. Wight removed to Chicago, and became editor of the *Prairie Farmer*. The paper during his management of thirteen years achieved great success. In 1849 he was also associated with William Bross, in the editorial management of the *Herald of the Prairie*, the western organ of the Presbyterian and Congregational churches. He purchased Mr. Bross' interest in 1851,



and two years later he sold his own interest. In 1856 Mr. Wight entered the ministry, and became pastor of the Presbyterian church at Olivet, Michigan. He remained in this pastorate until forced by ill health to resign, in 1863. The next year he was an editorial writer on the *Chicago Tribune*. In 1865 he accepted a call from the First Presbyterian church of Bay City, Michigan, where he remained until 1888. Mr. Wight was an able minister and a brilliant newspaper correspondent. His alma mater conferred upon him the title of Doctor of Divinity in 1871. Mr. Wight died November 14, 1889, at Bay City, at the age of seventy-eight years.

Austin Colton was more successful than his predecessor in the management of the *Forum*. He was a native of Northampton, Massachusetts. He had learned the printer's trade in the office of the *Massachusetts Spy*, and was subsequently employed for a time in Harpers' publishing house in New York. Mr. Colton came west in April, 1839, and arrived in Rockford in the following month. He was employed in the pioneer's vocation of log-building, fencing, and farming about four years, when he "purchased" the *Forum*. Mr. Colton continued the paper under the old name until the close of the first volume in February, 1844, when he re-christened it the *Rockford Forum*. Under his management the *Forum* became the first successful newspaper in Rockford. Its circulation increased from two hundred to six hundred. After Mr. Colton had "written for glory and printed on trust" for ten years he concluded to retire from the business. In December of that year he sold his plant to E. W. Blaisdell, Jr. Mr. Colton became a farmer, and continued in this vocation until his retirement from active life. This veteran editor died November 2, 1893, at the age of seventy-six years. Mrs. Colton still resides in Rockford. A. Lincoln, Albert L. and Royal F. Colton are sons. Miss Miriam Colton is a daughter.

Mr. Blaisdell took his brother, Richard P. Blaisdell, into partnership. The *Republican* was published until 1862, when it was purchased by Elias C. Daugherty, and merged into the *Rockford Register*, of which he was proprietor.

Elijah Whittier Blaisdell was born July 18, 1826, in Montpelier, Vermont, where he resided until the removal of the family to Middlebury. Later his father, who was a printer, removed to Vergennes, where he published the *Vergennes Vermonter*, which was founded by Rufus W. Griswold, whose "Poets and Poetry of America" is well known. The son succeeded the father

as editor of the *Vermont*; and while editing that paper, he was appointed postmaster of Vergennes by President Zachary Taylor. Mr. Blaisdell held this office four years. He came to Rockford in the latter part of 1853, and about January, 1854, he began his journalistic career in this city as editor of the *Forum*, and changed the name of the paper to the *Republican*. Mr. Blaisdell attended the meeting in Bloomington May 29, 1856, at which the Republican party was organized in Illinois. Abraham Lincoln addressed the convention; and Mr. Blaisdell then became convinced that Mr. Lincoln would lead the new party as its candidate for the presidency. General Palmer, in his book, *The Bench and Bar of Illinois*, says the *Republican* was the first paper to support Mr. Lincoln for the office in which he won immortal fame. Mr. Blaisdell was elected a member of the legislature in 1858, and voted for Mr. Lincoln for United States senator. After serving his term he studied law, was admitted to the bar, and practiced for many years. Since his retirement from active life Mr. Blaisdell has given attention to literary pursuits. He has written *The Hidden Record*, a novel; *The Rajah*, a political burlesque; and a drama, *Eva, the General's Daughter*, founded on incidents of the Black Hawk war. He is now editing a volume of miscellaneous poems, of three hundred pages. Mr. Blaisdell has been twice married. His first wife, Frances Robinson, died soon after he came to Illinois. His present wife was a daughter of Judge Ville Lawrence, of Vermont, and sister of the late Chief-Justice Lawrence, of Illinois. Another daughter of Judge Lawrence married John Pierpont, who was chief-justice of the supreme court of Vermont. Mr. Blaisdell has five sons: Byron Richard, of Chicago; Elijah Warde, an artist residing in New York City; Henry, George, and Shelley Pierpont, of Rockford.

In September, 1848, Henry W. De Puy established the Rockford *Free Press*, as a Free Soil or Barnburner organ. It was published until February, 1850, when it was discontinued for want of patronage.

The *Rock River Democrat* was founded in June, 1852, as a Democratic paper, by Benjamin Holt. David T. Dickson afterward purchased an interest. In 1855 Rhenodyne A. Bird purchased Mr. Holt's interest. The paper was published by Dickson & Bird until May 1, 1864. It was then purchased by Isaiah S. Hyatt, who continued its publication until June 12, 1865, when the plant was sold to the Register Company.



Elias C. Daugherty founded the *Rockford Register* in February, 1855, as a Republican paper, and a strong opponent of the extension of slavery. Mr. Daugherty continued its publication until June 12, 1865, when the business and that of the *Rock River Democrat* were purchased by a stock company, known as the Rockford Register Company, by whom the paper was published for many years.

The *Rockford Wesleyan Seminary Reporter* was begun as a monthly publication in October, 1857. Only four numbers of this paper were issued. It was published by Rev. W. F. Stewart, in the interest of the proposed Wesleyan seminary.

The *Democratic Standard* was founded October 30, 1858, by Springsteen & Parks, as a Democratic organ. After about a month the *Standard* was published by Henry Parks alone, until February 5, 1859, when David G. Croly became proprietor. On the 18th of May following the proprietorship was changed to D. G. Croly & Co. The company was John H. Grove. On the suspension of the *News*, April 30, 1860, and the retirement of Mr. Croly, the publication of the *Standard* was continued by John H. Gove and James S. Ticknor for a few months. The paper was then sold to James E. and Joseph H. Fox, who established the *Daily News*. It was a Republican paper, and the first number was issued December 1860. A few weeks later they began the publication of the *Weekly News*, which was continued until September 21, 1861. The plant was then sold to E. C. Daugherty, and its publication was discontinued.

The first *Daily News* was established by David G. Croly, February 8, 1859. The paper was neutral in politics. Its publication was continued until April 30, 1860, when it was suspended for want of patronage.

Mr. and Mrs. Croly won national reputations in journalism and letters after their departure from Rockford. David Goodman Croly was born in New York City November 3, 1829. He was a professor of phonography, and a reporter for the New York *Evening Post* and *Herald* before he came to Rockford. After his retirement from the *Rockford News* Mr. Croly became city editor of the New York *World*, and later was its managing editor. Mr. Croly's active journalistic career closed in 1878, when he retired from the editorship of the New York *Graphic*. He was the author of biographies of Seymour and Blair, History of Reconstruction, and a Primer of Positivism. He died in 1889.



Jane Cunningham Croly, more familiarly known as "Jennie June," was born in Market Harborough, England, December 13, 1831. Her father came to the United States when she was ten years old, and settled at Poughkeepsie, New York. She married David G. Croly in 1857. In 1860 Mrs. Croly became editor of *Demorest's Quarterly Mirror of Fashion*, and when that periodical and the *New York Weekly Illustrated News* were incorporated into *Demorest's Illustrated Monthly*, she became editor of the new journal, and retained this position until 1887. Mrs. Croly has also been editorially connected with several other New York papers. Mrs. Croly's pen-name of "Jennie June" was derived from a little poem written by Benjamin F. Taylor, sent to her when she was about twelve years old by her pastor at Poughkeepsie, with the name underlined, because, he said, "you are the Juniest little girl I know." Among Mrs. Croly's books are: *Talks on Women's Topics*, *For Better or Worse*, *A Cookery Book for Young Housekeepers*, *Knitting and Crochet*, *Letters and Monograms*. In 1856 Mrs. Croly called the first woman's congress; also the second, in 1869. In 1868 she founded the Sorosis, and was its president until 1870, and again from 1876 to 1886.

The *Daily Register* was started by E. C. Daugherty, June 1, 1859, as a Republican paper; but it was discontinued at the end of three months. Its publication was resumed in 1877.

The *Rock River Mirror* was established September 6, 1859, by Allen Gibson. It was neutral in politics, and was printed at the *Register* office.

The *Spirit Advocate*, published in 1854-56, was noted in the chapter devoted to Dr. George Haskell.

The *Rockton Gazette* was started in 1857, by Funk & Phelps. Soon after its first issue Mr. Funk retired, and its publication was continued about a year by H. W. Phelps. The paper was not well sustained, and the printing material was removed to Burlington, Wisconsin.

The *Pecatonica Independent* was established in May, 1859, by J. E. Duncan. Its publication was continued a little more than a year, when the plant was removed to Darlington, Wisconsin.

## CHAPTER XLIII.

### THE FIRST DAM.—THE WATER-POWER.—HIGH WATER OF 1844.

THE attempt to utilize the water-power was the first step in the transition of Rockford from a hamlet to a manufacturing city. February 28, 1843, an act of the legislature was approved, to improve the navigation of the rapids in Rock river at Rockford, and to incorporate the Rockford Hydraulic and Manufacturing Company. The corporation was given power to construct a dam across the river, which should raise the water not more than seven feet. The company was also required to erect and maintain such locks as might be necessary for the passage of steamboats drawing three feet of water. At that time the navigation of Rock river was an open question, and the government might assert its control of the river as a navigable stream. A dam would obstruct navigation; hence the company was required to construct locks for the passage of boats, whenever they should become necessary. The law specified the rates of toll which the company should be entitled to collect for the passage of boats through the locks; and it was given power to detain such craft until the toll should be paid. Daniel S. Haight, Germanicus Kent, Samuel D. Preston, Laomi Peake, Charles I. Horsman, George Haskell and J. C. Goodhue were appointed commissioners to receive subscriptions to the stock. The capital stock was placed at fifty thousand dollars, divided into five hundred shares of one hundred dollars each. The corporation was given power to increase its capital stock to any sum not exceeding two hundred and fifty thousand dollars. The law expressly provided that the state might, at any time after the construction of the dam and locks, assume the ownership of the same; the state, however, was to keep them in good repair. All the hydraulic power was to remain absolutely the property of the company. July 22, 1843, books were opened for subscriptions to the capital stock. By an act

of the legislature, approved February 11, 1845, the law of 1843 was amended.

In the spring of 1844 the Rockford Hydraulic Company was fully organized. The dam was located a few rods above the present water-works. Directly above, the main channel of the stream shifted abruptly from the east to the west shore. On the east side, at the site of the dam, the water for two-thirds the width of the stream, was about three feet deep in summer, with eight or nine feet in the channel. This site for the dam was chosen because it was generally believed that if the dam were located at the head of the rapids, the town would be built there. Had the dam been built at the ford, on the rock bottom, it would have required a larger outlay of cash. This article was scarce, while timber, brush, stone and earth were abundant.

Edward S. Hanchett, of Freeport, had charge of the construction of the dam when it was commenced. He abandoned the work, and he was succeeded by C. C. Coburn. Eighty acres of the best timber land were stripped of material to build the dam and repair the breaks. This brush dam was built to a level with the banks. A frame-work was then raised on the brush, to which plank was spiked. The work of graveling then began. The rock and gravel were obtained along the bank of the river from sixty to eighty rods above the dam. There were head-gates at either end, built high above the comb of the dam, with gates which opened like the gates of a lock on a canal, wide enough for the passage of steamboats. At each side of these gates were openings to admit the water to the races, which carried it to the mills below. As the water raised on the brush, the fish, coming down the river, would lodge on the dam during the night; and in the morning the people would get sturgeon, pickerel, black bass and catfish. The dam was completed in the autumn of 1845. In its issue of September 24th the *Forum* said: "As we hear the roaring sound of the falling waters (which can now on a still morning be heard for several miles around) daily increasing in strength and power, as the sheet of water becomes thicker and heavier, as the dam is made closer and tighter, we cannot but realize more forcibly the immense influence which these hydraulic works are to exert upon our town and country if the dam remains firm and permanent."

The mill-race on the East side extended to Walnut street, and was twenty feet in width. At the head of the race Gregory, Phelps & Daniels had a sawmill. At the south side of State



street was Nettleton's grist-mill, the first in Rockford, which was started in 1846. Just below, James B. Howell operated carding and fulling machinery. Wheeler & Lyon's sawmill was at Walnut street. The race on the West side was about fifteen rods in length. At the head Thomas D. Robertson and Charles I. Horsman built a sawmill. Just below, Orlando Clark had an iron foundry in a stone building. It is significant that three of these six plants were sawmills. Pine lumber had not come into general use, and the only available material for frame dwellings were the trees of the adjacent forests.

April 28, 1846, the west end of the dam went out. About two hundred feet, including the bulkhead, were swept away, and more than an acre of ground was washed out. The Hydraulic Company immediately decided to repair the dam, and the work was completed during the year.

March 20, 1847, the dam gave away at the east end, and carried away the sawmill of Gregory, Phelps & Daniels. About one hundred and fifty feet of the dam were washed out at this time. This break was repaired by Mr. Nettleton. Phelps and Daniels sold their interest in the wrecked sawmill to Lewis B. Gregory and A. C. Spafford, who rebuilt it. The mills then had good water-power until June 1, 1851, when the entire dam went out, breaking away at the west bulkhead. Several changes on the East side then followed. Mr. Howell removed his carding machine to New Milford, where he remained until the next year, when he returned to Rockford, to the West side, just below the Bartlett flouring mills. Wheeler & Lyon's mill was removed across the race near Joseph Rodd's mill, and became a part of his plant.

In February, 1849, the legislature provided for the improvement of the navigation of Rock river, and for the production of hydraulic power, under a general law. It appears by an entry on the county records, that under this law the company filed a certificate of incorporation April 13, 1849, before the abandonment of the enterprise. The organization of the present water-power company, two years later, will be considered in a later chapter.

The high water in 1844 throughout the northwest has a local interest, although this immediate vicinity was not flooded as was the central portion of the state. At and below St. Louis the Mississippi river was twenty miles wide, and flooded the American bottom from three to twenty feet deep. At St. Louis

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steamboats were loaded from the windows of the second story of the stores on the level. At Kaskaskia a steamboat ran out two miles from the main stream, laid the gang-plank from the deck to the window of a nunnery, and took the inmates aboard. About three hundred miles above Galena a steamer was grounded three miles from the channel of the Mississippi. The machinery was taken out, and preparations were made to burn the hull for the purpose of securing the iron, when the water arose and floated the boat into the channel. In the vicinity of Rockford the roads for most of the summer were impassable for anything but oxen. There has been no such season of continued high water in this locality since that time.

## CHAPTER XLIV.

### POSTMASTERS OF ROCKFORD.—ITS ONLY POSTMISTRESS.

THE early official records of the postoffice department at Washington are very meagre. There are no local records, as these are supposed to be kept at Washington. In 1890 Hon. Robert R. Hitt addressed a letter to Hon. John Wanamaker, who was then postmaster-general, asking for information upon this subject. That official replied that the records were incomplete during the early history of the service, and he could only give the time of appointment and resignation of the first postmaster. The later information has been obtained from the files of the Rockford newspapers in the public library. This is the only source from which the facts given in this chapter could be secured. The research involved considerable time and labor, and it is impossible to give the exact date upon which the commissions were issued.

Daniel S. Haight was the first postmaster. His commission was dated August 31, 1837, and he served until May, 1841.

Mr. Haight was succeeded by Edward Warren, a brother of Mrs. Charles H. Spafford. Mr. Warren served until August, 1841.

Selden M. Church was the third postmaster, and served two years, when he was removed. The announcement of this change was made in three lines by the Rockford *Forum*. In the entire history of Rockford there is nothing more marked than the evolution of its newspapers from the most primitive sort to the present daily of metropolitan proportions.

In August, 1843, Charles H. Spafford was appointed postmaster. There is a tradition that Mr. Church was quite active in obtaining the office; and, to balance the account, Mr. Warren, who was not lacking in influence, used it in securing the appointment for his brother-in-law. Mrs. Spafford recalls interesting reminiscences of those days. She says: "The postoffice business was not large at that time; there were no clerks. The mail came at night, and required the postmaster to get out at midnight or very early morning to change the mail. What seems more strange, the postoffice money was kept at the house



in my dressing bureau. Mr. Spafford was accustomed to come home late in the evening, bringing a bag of money. In those times of burglaries all this occasioned me a good deal of anxiety, as I was alone so much of the time when Mr. Spafford was at the office; especially as houses were not securely built in those days. I was not sorry when the robber band that had been committing the burglaries around, were secured and taken to Joliet."

In July, 1845, Charles I. Horsman received the appointment. The postoffice was removed to the West side, nearly opposite the Winnebago House. The office has remained on the West side to this day.

B. G. Wheeler was appointed in May, 1849, and served four years.

In June, 1853, Charles I. Horsman received a second appointment, and served until 1857.

G. F. Hambright succeeded Mr. Horsman, in March, 1857, and held the office four years.

Melancthon Smith was commissioned by President Lincoln in 1861. Mr. Smith subsequently enlisted in the service of his country, and went to the front with the Forty-fifth Illinois regiment. He was first chosen captain of his company. The regiment was known as the Lead Mine Regiment, and went into camp at Galena. Upon the organization of the regiment he was chosen major, and was promoted to the rank of lieutenant-colonel. Colonel Smith won distinction at Donelson and Shiloh. During his absence the postoffice was in charge of Mrs. Smith.

June 25, 1863, Colonel Smith was mortally wounded at the storming of a fort at Vicksburg by General Logan's division. He lingered three days in a state of half-consciousness, and died Sunday morning, June 28th, in the thirty-sixth year of his age. His remains were brought to Rockford for burial. Funeral services were held July 11th, at the home of his father-in-law, John Edwards. His remains lay in state in front of the house. The discourse was delivered by Rev. F. M. Holland, pastor of the Unitarian church, of which Colonel Smith was a member.

Sunday afternoon, August 2d, Dr. H. M. Goodwin preached a memorial sermon in the Second Congregational church. Concerning Colonel Smith's Christian patriotism, Dr. Goodwin said: "The religious character of Colonel Smith partook of the sincerity and conscientiousness which pervaded all his life and actions. Religion was not something on one side of his life and character, separated from it by a gulf of silence and mystery;

but it entered into the substance of his daily life, and formed the warp and woof of his whole character. It was a thing of principle, and not of feeling or belief merely. His religious convictions were the result of personal thought and experience, and not a mere traditional belief; were formed and adhered to on the same principle which actuated all his other convictions—fidelity to his own reason and conscience. Before deciding to enter the army, he made the question a subject of devout and earnest prayer, and the decision when made was a religious consecration to the service of his country, expecting never to return, but to die on the field of battle.”

After Colonel Smith's death the local politicians supported David T. Dixon as the logical candidate for his successor in the postoffice. A petition, however, was numerously signed by the citizens, asking for the appointment of Mrs. Smith. Melancthon Starr, who was a cousin of Colonel Smith, went to Washington and presented the matter to President Lincoln. The president endorsed her application, and sent a letter to the postmaster-general, of which the following is a copy:

“EXECUTIVE MANSION, WASHINGTON, July 24, 1863.—*Hon. Postmaster-General*: Yesterday little indorsements of mine went to you in two cases of postmasterships sought for widows whose husbands have fallen in the battles of this war. These cases occurring on the same day brought me to reflect more attentively than I had before done, as to what is fairly due from us here in the dispensing of patronage toward the men who, by fighting our battles, bear the chief burden of saving our country. My conclusion is, that other claims and qualifications being equal, they have the better right, and this is especially applicable to the disabled soldier and the deceased soldier's family. Your obedient servant, A. LINCOLN.”

Mrs. Smith accordingly received the appointment, and completed the term. Mrs. Smith became the wife of General A. L. Chetlain, of Chicago. She is a sister of Mrs. Julia A. Clemens, of Rockford.

Mrs. Smith was succeeded by Hon. Anson S. Miller, who assumed the duties April 1, 1865. He retained the office until 1871, when Charles H. Spafford was appointed. The succession to date is as follows: Abraham E. Smith, Thomas G. Lawler, John D. Waterman, Thomas G. Lawler, John D. Waterman, Thomas G. Lawler. Colonel Lawler and Mr. Waterman have continued their official see-saw for twenty years.



## CHAPTER XLV.

### ORGANIZATION OF THE UNIVERSALIST CHURCH.

THE Unitarian church did not at first include all the adherents of a liberal Christian faith. At a meeting held in the brick schoolhouse, in East Rockford, April 24, 1841, a Universalist church was organized by the election of Daniel S. Haight, Ezra Dorman, and Thomas Thatcher as trustees. This election was recorded in the recorder's office, as provided by law. It is not probable that the official records of this church have been preserved. It is known, however, that preaching services were held at the court house on the East side, and at the schoolhouse a portion of the time during the next ensuing few months.

In 1841 the Universalists were sufficiently strong to consider the erection of a house of worship. In those days the citizens regarded any church, of whatever name, as a factor in promoting the general welfare of the village. Hence the name of a generous, public-spirited citizen would be found among the contributors to the support of liberal and orthodox churches alike. The original subscription list for the Universalist church, which is still extant, is an interesting document. Mr. Haight gave a lot which he valued at one hundred dollars; the same amount in carpenter's and joiner's work; "forty-two sleepers in my wood-lot near Rockford, seventeen feet long, at three cents per foot, twenty-one dollars and forty-two cents;" and fifty dollars in money. Almost the entire subscriptions are in work or material. William Worthington subscribed ten dollars in blacksmith's work; Charles Latimer, twenty dollars, how paid is not stated; A. M. Catlin, in produce or building material, twenty-five dollars; J. M. Wight, one thousand feet of lumber at Stokes & Jewett's mill, twelve dollars.

On Thursday, July 22, 1841, the corner-stone of the Universalist church was laid on a site near the East side public square. The large assemblage included people of other denominations. Prayer was offered by Rev. Mr. Van Alstine, and a discourse was delivered by Rev. Seth Barnes. This structure was never completed. A stranger, in passing the unfinished building,



inquired of Dr. George Haskell concerning its purpose. The Doctor replied that it was an "insurance policy against hell-fire." All the original supporters of this project are gone; and not even tradition has given the cause for its sudden abandonment. Thus the Unitarian church became the one liberal household of faith.

Strong Universalist churches are rare. These apostles of the "wider hope" have never become a vigorous ecclesiastical body. A few years ago a clergyman of that denomination contributed to one of the reviews an article entitled *Confessions of a Universalist*. He took an optimistic view of the future of his church; yet he considered with remarkable fairness its apparent limitations. A brief extract from this article is very suggestive. The gentleman said: "We have also suffered, and do suffer, from the presence of a class of easy-going optimists, whose general idea of this life appears to be that a good-natured Creator is coaxing his rabbit-multitudes of creatures easily along toward an infinite cabbage-garden of a heaven, where they will all eat cabbages forever! These amiable persons mistake their constitutional imperturbability for the serene repose of faith, and are therefore immovable by any instrumentality less powerful than dynamite. A meeting-house full of them can be made as enthusiastic as a half-acre of damp toadstools."

This frank acknowledgement should be balanced by a recognition of the moral worth of the leaders of the old school of Universalism. They were men of strong character and genuine spirituality. They believed that every man, by divine and gracious help, must work out his own salvation. They recognized, in the tragic severity of the retributive laws, the Creator's tribute of respect to the possibilities of his creature. With solemn joy they learned by the return of their deeds upon their heads, that they were under moral discipline. Conversely, these men believed that, as darkness can resolve itself into light, so will the evil be dissolved in the good; that the eternal streams of goodness will wash away the evil; that the hand of Omnipotence is able to press the tears of repentance from the heart, though it seem hard as steel. Thus, under the name of Universalism, have been brought together the two poles of a careless optimism, and a sublime faith in the beneficent severity of the moral order of the world.

## CHAPTER XLVI.

### FIRST BRIDGE.—FIRST FOUNDRY AND MACHINE SHOP.

TEN years elapsed from the first settlement of the village before Rock river was spanned by a bridge at Rockford. A bill had passed the legislature, approved February 27, 1843, authorizing Daniel S. Haight, George Haskell, S. D. Preston, Charles I. Horsman, and their associates to build a bridge. When completed in a manner so as not to obstruct the navigation of the river, and accepted by the county commissioners' court, it was to be a public highway, and kept in repair by the county. But nothing was done until nearly one year later, when the construction of the county buildings on the West side emphasized this need to the citizens of the East side, where the courts had been held. The entire people felt that a bridge must be built, although few had means enough to conduct their own business successfully. Citizens of the West side, including the country west of the village, had built the court house and jail without a dollar's expense to their neighbors on the east side of the river. But the progressive citizens were willing to assume another burden. At a meeting held in December, 1843, a committee consisting of E. H. Potter, D. Howell, Willard Wheeler, C. I. Horsman and G. A. Sanford, were appointed to solicit subscriptions. A persistent effort throughout the county secured pledges to warrant the construction of an oak lattice bridge. All the money raised at this time was by subscription. The most liberal contributors were Frink, Walker & Co., the stage proprietors. January 22, 1844, the committee let the contract to Derastus Harper. This gentleman was a competent workman. He subsequently went to Chicago, became the city engineer, and designed the first pivot bridge across the Chicago river. The lumber was cut from trees on government land on Pecatonica river, rafted down the Rock, and sawed at Mr. Kent's mill. The covering for the lattice was basswood boards, cut from logs in Mr. Blake's grove, and sawed at Kent's mill. C. I. Horsman and William G. Ferguson drew the logs. By August or September, Mr. Harper had sufficient material on

hand to commence laying the bridge. This was done nearly in the rear of the Masonic Temple site, on the piece of level bottom. The bridge was of three strings of lattice-work, made from oak planks, fastened with oak pins. There was no iron in the structure, except the nails that held the half-inch basswood boards which covered the lattice when the structure was completed. There were stone abutments on either shore. Christmas night, 1844, the lattice was in place a distance of about seventy feet from the west shore, supported by temporary trestles. Ice formed about the trestles from the west shore. The water arose and lifted the entire structure, including the trestles, when it toppled over with a crash. The pride and fond anticipations of the village went out with it. Such discouragement is seldom depicted on the faces of the entire community. All shared in the disappointment; but the energies of the citizens were not easily foiled. A united effort was made in a short time, and promises were again secured. The abutments, piers and one section were left, and some of the material was saved which had floated down stream. The fallen lattice was taken from the water, and each plank numbered with red chalk; and excepting a few that were splintered, they were again placed in proper order. After the ice went out in March, 1845, the structure was again raised, without accident. Cheerfulness and hopefulness assumed full sway; and after many discouragements the bridge was open for travel, July 4, 1845. It was a time of great rejoicing. The public-spirited citizens of Rockford felt that Independence Day had been properly celebrated. When the last plank had been laid, E. H. Potter mounted a horse, and was the first man to ride across the bridge. It was estimated that two thousand people crossed the bridge that day. There were two roadways, separated by the centre lattice, which projected about five feet above the planking.

Perhaps no other public improvement in Rockford ever so tested the courage and financial strength of the community. The burden fell heavily upon the committee. The contract with Mr. Harper was for five thousand and five hundred dollars. A financial statement made July 15, 1845, showed that only two thousand eight hundred and forty-seven dollars and ninety cents had been collected. The committee had borrowed five hundred dollars on their personal credit, for which they were paying twelve per cent. There was also a balance due Mr. Harper of one thousand two hundred and ninety-seven dollars.







**MANDEVILLE HOUSE**

Built in 1837 by Richard Montague. Still standing



**BRINCKERHOFF HOUSE**

Built by George W. Brinkerhoff in 1838, on the northwest corner of Main and Green streets. Still standing

The bridge served its day and generation very well, but it was subject to many calamities. The dam broke three times after the bridge was completed. When the west end broke in April, 1846, the pressure of the water on the upper side of the centre and principal pier removed the foundation on that side, and settled the bridge in the center on the up-stream side nearly to the water, and gave it the appearance of being twisted nearly one-fourth around. The bridge stood in this position for some months, when a contract was made with William Ward to raise it into position. The bridge sustained some injury when the eastern portion of the dam broke in April, 1847. On the 25th of February preceding, a law of the legislature had been approved, providing for a special tax to be levied upon the taxable property of Rockford precinct, for the purpose of repairing and maintaining the bridge, and for the payment of the debt incurred in its construction. Newton Crawford, Bela Shaw, Ephraim Wyman and Daniel McKenney were appointed bridge commissioners by the act, and vested with power to declare the amount of tax to be levied, which was not to exceed fifty cents on one hundred dollars. These commissioners were appointed by the act, until their successors should be elected annually at the August election. When the dam went out the third time, in June, 1851, the bridge withstood the rush of waters, although it was wrenched from its position. It reminded one of a cow-path or a rail-fence, and had a very insecure look. Though twisted from end to end, it kept its place very tenaciously until it was replaced by the covered bridge in the winter of 1852-53. Its memory should be treated with respect. It enabled people to attend their own respective churches, for nearly everybody went in those days—Congregationalists on the West side, and the Methodists on the East side. Postoffice and county buildings were accessible to all. It proved a bond of union between the two sides.

The first foundry and machine shop was built in the autumn of 1843, or early in the spring of the following year. It stood on the site of Jeremiah Davis' residence, on North Second street. The proprietors were Peter H. and William Watson. Their father's family came from Canada, and settled on a farm in the Enoch neighborhood in Guilford. Peter Watson was at one time assistant secretary of war during the civil conflict, and at a later period was president of the New York and Erie railroad.



The foundry was running in the spring of 1844. The proprietors obtained a contract for large pumps and pipes for raising water from the lead mines at Galena. March 11, 1845, William Watson sold his interest in the business to his brother, and engaged in the manufacture of fanning-mills. Peter H. continued the foundry until August, 1845. His successors in the business at this stand were in turn: R. F. Reynolds, D. K. Lyon, John Stevens, H. H. Silsby, Laomi Peake, and James L. Fountain. The last named proprietor removed the material and patterns to New Milford about 1852. The last year Mr. Silsby conducted the business, in 1849, it was prosperous. People came a distance of forty miles to get their work done. Mr. Silsby was often required to work nights in order to keep up with his orders. James Worsley was the expert moulder during all these years, and he was master of his trade. He was afterward in the employ of Clark & Utter until his retirement from the business by reason of old age.

Orlando Clark, who has been erroneously credited with building the first foundry, came from Beloit in 1847, and established himself in business on the West side race, where he remained until 1851, when he went into business with Mr. Utter on the new water-power. Mr. Clark built the residence in South Rockford which is now the home of Judge John C. Garver.

## CHAPTER XLVII.

WORCESTER A. DICKERMAN.—ROCKFORD AS HE SAW IT IN 1844.

**W**ORCESTER A. DICKERMAN was born in Green county, New York, September 10, 1820. He came to Rockford in 1844. Upon his arrival he immediately went into partnership with his cousin, G. A. Sanford, under the firm name of W. A. Dickerman & Co., in the dry goods business. Their store was a two-story brick structure on the old Second National Bank corner. After four years they removed to a building which stood on the site of H. H. Waldo's book-store, where the business was continued for several years. The banking house of Dickerman, Wheeler & Sanford was then founded, which did business in the old building on the southeast corner of State and Main. Mr. Wheeler retired and was succeeded by Dr. R. P. Lane. The firm name was Lane, Sanford & Company, with Mr. Dickerman as the silent partner. This firm did a private banking business until the national banking system was introduced, in 1865. The firm was given the second banking charter, under the name of the Second National Bank.

Upon the retirement of Mr. Dickerman from the banking business, he devoted his attention to insurance. He was one of the incorporators of the Rockford Insurance Company, and from 1884 to the time of his death he served as examiner in the mercantile department. Mr. Dickerman was school commissioner from 1847 to 1849. In 1847 he was united in marriage with Miss Caroline Thomas, eldest daughter of Dr. Alden Thomas; and in 1897 they celebrated their golden wedding. Mr. Dickerman was prominent in church work. He was a member of the First Congregational church until 1849, when the Second church was formed. He became a charter member of the younger society, and in his later years he was familiarly known as its senior deacon. Mr. Dickerman was for some time the pur-

chasing agent for Rockford seminary. The highest type of gentleman is born; not made. Emerson says: "When private men shall act with vast views, the lustre will be transferred from the actions of kings to those of gentlemen." Mr. Dickerman belonged to this class. He was upright and genial; and probably never made a personal enemy. Full of years and crowned with honor, Mr. Dickerman passed away July 19, 1899. His immediate surviving family are Mrs. Dickerman; Miss Katherine, a daughter; and a son, Harry W.

A short time before his death Mr. Dickerman prepared for this volume a chapter of reminiscences of Rockford as he saw it in 1844. It is a pleasant running commentary on men, places and things. An exact reproduction of his reminiscences would necessarily involve a repetition of statements already familiar to the reader; but the remainder of this chapter is substantially as Mr. Dickerman gave it to the author, although it contains a few slight repetitions of facts previously given.

A ride in an open lumber wagon of about three days, coming from Chicago with Alonzo Corey, who had been in the city with a load of wheat, brought us to Rockford. Though somewhat tiresome, we expected some inconveniences, and accepted them gracefully. To one who had lived among the Catskill mountains, the open prairies had much of interest. Garden Prairie was very attractive. Mr. Corey would say: "Wait until you see the Rock river country." The State road from Belvidere was principally through wooded land. As we came to Bela Shaw's place, unexpected improvements appeared: a row of thrifty young poplar trees set in front, a half circle formed inside, with an avenue from that to the dwelling; also an avenue from the street to the barn. Mr. Shaw was a justice of the peace; very dignified, guarding well the morals of the community. He was an excellent specimen of a Canadian English gentleman. From Mr. Shaw's residence to the village, there were about one and a half miles of prairie, which afforded a very extended view in all directions. The high ground on the east was timber-land, known as "Big Woods." South, west and north the outlook was attractive. Stages in passing were often stopped by request of passengers to take in the beautiful view. There were a few patches of cultivated land and small dwellings, but nothing to obstruct the view in any direction. "And now," says Mr. Corey, "this is the part of the Rock river valley



of which I have told you." Truly, I had never seen a prettier picture. I think there were no buildings between Mr. Shaw's home and the village, which was completely shut out of view by the forest, and no church spires to indicate its location. Frink, Walker & Co.'s stage barn near the present watering-trough on Kishwaukee street, was the first building. A two-story building, corner of State and First street, occupied in part by Laomi Peake, a harness-maker, was the best in town. There were then no other shops. Mr. Peake was an energetic, industrious man. A little farther west was the postoffice. Charles H. Spafford was the postmaster. He was a genial, upright, frank-hearted man, well adapted to the business, and very popular. His two brothers, John and Catlin, were on a farm three miles south on the Kishwaukee road. Mr. Spafford's successor under James K. Polk's administration, was Charles I. Horsman, who removed the office to the west side of the river. Willard Wheeler had a store and tin-shop near by. He was a very decided character, sometimes called obstinate; always aiming to head off the West-siders, who were alert and ready to guard their own interests. Near at hand Searle & Worthington had the only drug store in town. Dr. Searle was quite a politician, and the store was a sort of political headquarters. William Worthington was a quiet man, and highly esteemed. He was fond of music, and particularly the drum.

On the south side of State street Lewis Holmes had a shoe-shop. The Washington Temperance House came next, kept by so-called Judge Blackstone, a popular landlord. Volney Marsh and Thomas D. Robertson, young married people, were among his fashionable boarders. Across East State street, on the corner, was the Rockford House, known as the stage house, kept by Andrew Brown, a very good landlord. Directly north was the New York store, kept by A. H. H. Perkins, a genial, active business man. He was popular, and had a good trade. On the southwest corner of State and Main, now called Madison, was a two-story brick building. It was the largest in town, with the most complete stock of goods, owned and conducted by E. H. Potter. He was a very decided, upright business man, prominent in the church and everything that pertained to good citizenship and the prosperity of the village, and particularly East Rockford. He was the father of Mrs. William Lathrop and Commodore E. E. Potter. He built and occupied the brick building now owned by Rev. Mead Holmes as a residence. Mr.

Potter had a brother, Herman B. Potter, a farmer, and a man highly esteemed. His dwelling stood on ground now occupied by the First Congregational church. He also had another brother, Joel B. Potter, a farmer, who resided two miles from the village. He was formerly a Presbyterian clergyman. His health had failed, but he was still an active and valuable man in the church. I first knew him as Sunday-school superintendent in the Congregational church. The second story of the Potter store was occupied by Jason Marsh and James M. Wight, the principal law firm in the town. They were public-spirited citizens. Mr. Marsh was a bold, daring man, a fluent speaker, ready for any emergency, and well adapted to a new country. He was very active in securing the arrest and conviction of noted burglars and horse-thieves in connection with the Mulford robbery. Some of these had been the more dangerous because they were well-known citizens. Their duplicity was shown in their apparent anxiety to ferret out horse-thieves, while at the same time they were keeping them fully advised of all proceedings. Mr. Wight did not make a specialty of pleading at the bar; but he was a thorough lawyer, and highly appreciated as a counselor.

The descent from the Potter store to the river was quite steep. The surface of the river was four feet lower before the dam was built. Teamsters with heavy loads called it the hardest hill, from the river bank to Madison street, between Chicago and Rockford. The road was quite sandy, and frequently the teams were doubled in order to make the ascent. On the south side of State, Mrs. Preston, since Mrs. Selden M. Church, had a dwelling, and was married there. The crossing of the river was by ferry-boat, which would carry two teams at a time. John Fisher was ferryman, and he was assisted by Asher Miller. Rock river was a clear, beautiful stream at its ordinary stage. So small a portion of the prairies was under cultivation that the soil did not wash into the stream. Its banks sloped gently from the ford, as far up as one could see. There was a small island near the present water-works, and another farther north. Both were nearly submerged by the effect of the dam. A large number of teams crossed the river at the ford. In ordinary stage of water it was from two to two and a half feet deep, all rock bottom. It was quite an attractive sight when several teams followed in succession. In this way they saved the ferriage fee. Many teams were employed in transporting merchandise from Chicago to Galena and points up the Mississippi. On their return trips



they often bought wheat and sold it in Chicago. At times, when the ice in the river had not become strong enough, and about the season it was breaking up, neither ford, ferry nor row-boats were available, however important one's business might be. Sometimes this condition continued several days. The bridge, when completed after much delay and discouragement, formed a bond of union between the two sides; but it must not be supposed that perfect harmony existed among the leading men in the management of their respective sides. William E. Dunbar, E. H. Potter, Willard Wheeler and Dr. Searle were on the East side; and Charles I. Horsman, G. A. Sanford, John A. Holland, S. M. Church and T. D. Robertson were citizens of the West side. They were representative men, loyal to the interests of Rockford, but much more loyal to their respective sides. Sharp conflicts were frequent.

On the West side, between the river and Main street, there was one building, a dwelling, on the north side of State. There was none on the south side until reaching the corner of State and Main. A two-story brick building, nearly new, was occupied by G. A. Sanford as a general store. He kept the largest and best stock of goods on the West side. He had about eleven hundred dollars invested, and enjoyed a very good trade. He was a leading man in all new enterprises for village improvement on the West side; he was thoroughly interested in whatever contributed to the religious, educational or business prosperity of the village. Mr. Sanford was a man of great energy, and had just completed a term as sheriff of the county. He had many desperate characters to deal with; and nothing but his determined bravery enabled him to succeed. Mr. Sanford was acquainted with every resident in the county, and was held in high esteem. He took in a partner, then twenty-four years of age. The manner of doing business was quite different from the present, and some particulars may be of interest.

The money was in great variety, gold and silver as well as paper. There were no banks, and funds were exchanged as far as possible by such as could buy New York exchange in Chicago. Gold, for purchasing goods, was carried in money-belts to New York. Hiram R. Maynard was about to go into business. He entrusted his money and gave full authority to the junior partner to purchase a general stock. In the aggregate it was quite a sum of money, for the time, to take along. He would have been a good subject for the thieves that infested the



country if they had known his treasure. The partner started for New York on Thursday, February 20, 1845. He had a fine, large buffalo-robe to protect him from the weather. The ice in the river was breaking up; but two strong men in a row-boat crossed among floating cakes of ice, and took a mud wagon stage on the East side. The roads were bad, but two nights and a part of three days brought him safely to Chicago on Saturday. The partner stopped at the American Temperance House, well kept by Brown & Tuttle. This was a newer and better building than the Tremont or Mansion. The Sherman was the only brick hotel in the city, located on its present ground. The partner attended the First Presbyterian church on Sunday. This was a one-story, frame structure. There were nothing but frame churches in Chicago at that time. On Monday he took the stage by way of Michigan City to Detroit; stage again from Detroit through Canada to Buffalo, traveling night and day; railroad from there to Albany; flat rail; and two days from there to his old home in the Catskill mountains. As the goods could not be shipped until the opening of the Hudson river and the Erie canal, he delayed purchasing until that time. The canal boats were loaded in New York, and towed to Albany. It was considered very good time if goods came from New York to Rockford in three weeks. The partner returned by way of the lakes, and arrived in Rockford May 1st, and most of the goods were received during the month. Mr. Maynard's stock also came in good time, and he expressed himself well satisfied with his selection.

The sign of W. A. Dickerman & Co. was seen on the brick store, corner of State and Main. It was about twenty by fifty deep; counter on one side, and the east end was now filled with a well selected stock of dry goods, groceries, crockery, hardware, and some drugs. Such a stock was kept as found ready purchasers from all parts of the county. The partners were never happier in a business way than then. Before harvesting, grain was all cut with hand cradles, and raked and bound by hand, which required additional help and greater supplies. I took our team and went to Galena, which then had a large wholesale grocery trade, mainly in the mining region. Steamers brought their supplies from New Orleans and St. Louis, and shipped away their lead. I purchased a supply of goods and returned within a week. This purchase gave us a complete stock until fall purchases could be made in New York.

On the Ashton corner was a two-story brick hotel, called the Winnebago House. Thence west there were no buildings on either side of State, until we arrive at the court house, which was the pride of the whole county. The new building was well adapted to the needs of the community. The main building was a court room, with two rooms in rear for jury, and a wing on each side, occupied respectively by the county clerk, recorder, sheriff, circuit clerk, and probate justice of the peace. The last office was held by Selden M. Church, who occupied the west wing. The court room served a good purpose for lectures and public gatherings. It was then the only public hall in town. A brick jail in the rear, near the present location, was really the best in the country, and considered very secure. Samuel C. Fuller, the jailer, was a man well fitted for the time; he was ready for any emergency, and perfectly fearless. He had the Mulford robbers and several desperate horse-thieves in charge at one time. A special guard was kept at night for a time during their confinement awaiting trial; also to convey them across the country to the penitentiary after their conviction.

On the McPherson corner, north of the courthouse, was the residence of Dr. Alden Thomas. He was a natural gentleman, reliable, and active in church and society work. He had nearly retired from medical practice. On the Horsman estate, which retains its trees and natural appearance more than any other place in the city, resided Abiram and Mrs. Morgan. Though rather a small house, their good cheer made it abound in hospitality. Their daughter and her husband, Charles I. Horsman, were very genial, and made their home attractive. They were fond of society. Parties were frequent, and guests from Belvidere and Freeport were usually in attendance. No party was considered complete without the presence of Mrs. Morgan. Their church home was the First Baptist, where they were generous contributors.

West on State street, this side of Kent's creek, which was then quite a large, beautiful stream, was a cemetery, near Mrs. Richings' residence. But another retired place had been selected in the woods, which it was supposed would not be disturbed for many years; and most of the bodies had been removed there. When the Galena & Chicago Union railroad was built, the company wanted the grounds. The proceeds of that sale purchased the beautiful West side cemetery, and furnished a fund for its improvement. The bodies were again removed,



and owners of lots in the former grounds were given lots in the new cemetery.

The first house west of the city limits was occupied by a Scotch shepherd. His sheep often came down and fed in the woods. In hot weather they found a comfortable place under the Congregational church, which was built on a block foundation, about two feet off the ground. Nearly every family kept their own cows, as there was a large range for them in which to run. It was sometimes difficult to find them if they did not come home at night. To remedy this perplexity, many put bells on them. Each owner aimed to get one that he could recognize at a distance. It was quite pleasant music when several cows came home together. There were but few enclosed farms between Rockford and Twelve-Mile Grove.

Before going down on Main street we hear the stage-driver's horn. Frink, Walker & Co.'s tri-weekly mail stage is coming in from Galena. See that skilled driver cracking his long whip over his horses! How beautifully he drives down State street! He is the admiration of all the boys, as he reins up his prancing horses at the Winnebago House. In fact, he attracts everybody. It equaled a special train at this time, for he brings distinguished company: Judge Thomas C. Brown, M. D. Johnson, Thomas Drummond and E. B. Washburne, of Galena; Thomas J. Turner and Martin P. Sweet, of Freeport. They made a specially quick run, less than eighteen hours from Galena. They came to attend circuit court. It was expected then to see several lawyers from other counties attending courts. The best horses and most gorgeous coaches started and came in from the two ends of the line, to and from Rockford. They crossed the river on the ferry-boat to the stage house on the East side, and then to the stage barn, where a fresh relay of horses and another driver were provided; and soon the passengers are moving rapidly toward Chicago. About the same time the stage rushes in from Chicago, and brings the United States mail. Then comes the rush for letters by all who have twenty-five cents to pay the letter postage. In this stage come the lawyers, Allen C. Fuller, James M. Loop and Stephen A. Hurlbut, of Belvidere. The excitement of the arrival and departure of the stages for two days is now over, and we will go down Main street.

The Horsman lot, Porter's corner, is vacant to the court house. Where Daniel Dow's block now stands, he had a small,



one-story building, a shoe-shop, in which he worked. George Tullock worked for him. They were young men. This shop was a popular resort in the evening to discuss the news of the day. In the autumn, on bright sunny days, fever and ague subjects found the front a pleasant lounging-place. They sat on boxes and joked each other about his pale, sallow face. Their recitals about jarring the house, and shaking themselves out of their boots, either amusing or frightening their families, were quite ridiculous. Fortunately, most of the houses were only one story at that time. Here comes Uncle Stone, an old veteran, who lives near the cemetery, on the bank of Kent's creek, by the mill-dam, which is a regular breeder of ague. He has had a hard tussle with it for two or three years. "How about the chills this year, Uncle?" "I had an awful time yesterday; thought I would shake my teeth out; folks all sick; but I'm goin' ter wear the ager out this year or quit. It comes only once a week now." "Well, you don't look much like conquering such a powerful enemy; it is more likely that you will be laid away in the cemetery." As a parting salute to Fever and Ague, I say that I never heard a good word spoken for you; though you mingled in good society, you always commenced the fight when we were convalescing from bilious or typhoid fever; and however polite our solicitations, you never left until driven away by good health.

Very near Mr. Dow's shoe-shop was G. A. Sanford's residence, with many additions. This was my home about two years. A part of it may now be seen on the lot south of Keyt's livery stable, near the centre bridge. A house on this lot was the first one occupied as a store by John Platt and G. A. Sanford, and as a dwelling by them and D. D. Alling and their wives. On the Chick House corner was a dwelling house occupied by Albert Sanford and Hiram R. Maynard. Both were recently married; they were men of strict integrity, and were highly esteemed for generous, kindly acts in daily life. Albert was one of those genial, social neighbors who could brighten the dark places of many sick and discouraged ones, and always ready to lend a helping hand. On the east side of Main street, near Loomis' store, was a dwelling occupied by H. W. Loomis, his father and mother. On the Winnebago Bank corner was a dwelling occupied by H. L. Rood, an active man, but not then engaged in business. He was gentlemanly and affable; looked after the strangers, and was ever ready to show them the

village, for which he always predicted a bright future. H. R. Maynard built a one-story store on the Masonic Temple corner, which he occupied a short time. It was then used by C. A. Huntington as an academy. The Second Congregational church was organized in this building in 1849. It is now used as a blacksmith's shop near Mrs. Brett's block. Near the south corner, now the site of the Brown Building, was a small cabinet-shop. Boston rockers, Windsor chairs, wooden seats, other articles of furniture, and coffins were manufactured here. I do not recollect any other buildings on this side of the street until arriving at Ephraim Wyman's bakery. This was located near the ford. It was convenient for emigrants and teamsters to get their supplies, as many camped out, and slept in their wagons at night. This was cash trade, and valuable, as the village patronage was small. Kent's creek was forded somewhat east of Main street. Wyman's bakery was the place where the young men could indulge in the luxury of his home-made beer and ginger-bread, and enjoy his good cheer. We remember him as a generous, whole-souled man. His business naturally attracted the hungry and destitute; and if worthy they were never turned away. His daily life was exemplary, and his counsel good. The records of Winnebago county show that very important trusts were committed to him; and he never proved false to the confidence reposed in him. Opportunities were not lacking for him to secure a competence, but he preferred the consciousness of doing right at all times. Like many of the early business men, he came to the close of his life in limited circumstances, and left the inheritance of a good name. After the bridge was built he came up on State street, and started a boarding house.

The log and frame dwelling, supposed to be the first building on the west side of the river, was occupied by Germanicus Kent. When Main street was opened it was removed across the creek. Mr. Kent was associated with Mr. Brinckerhoff. They nominally owned several tracts of land south and west of the village, which have since become very valuable. They were unsuccessful in their enterprises. Mr. Brinckerhoff left town before I came, and Mr. Kent's family removed the year that I arrived. I had but little personal acquaintance with them; but I always heard them spoken of in the highest terms. There was a dwelling where the Emerson stone warehouse now stands, south of the Northwestern railroad track, occupied by Deras-tus Harper, the bridge contractor. On the northeast corner of



the same block, was a dwelling owned and occupied by Nathaniel Wilder, a good blacksmith, from Keene, New Hampshire. He was a genuine New England Yankee. Block seventeen, next north, was covered with a fine growth of oak, with no buildings. On the corner north of the postoffice was a dwelling built by Mr. Brinckerhoff. It was the first house for a great many new-comers until they could build. Sometimes three families were thus accommodated at the same time. The building still stands on the same ground. The prettiest building on the street was called "The Cottage," and was occupied by John W. Taylor, who came here with his young wife from Albany, New York. They were genteel, excellent people. For a time Mr. Taylor sold goods in a store on the corner of Main and Chestnut; but it was closed when I came. David D. Alling's carpenter's shop, a little north of it, still stands. His dwelling was near it. Mr. Alling was fond of hunting, and very successful. He usually had some dried venison hams hanging in his shop. Mr. Alling built the house for W. A. Dickerman, on North Main street, before that street was opened. The house was one of the best, and almost the first that was covered with pine lumber. This house is now owned by William F. Woodruff. A house where the Blaisdell block now stands completed the buildings on South Main street, which was the most thickly settled of any part of the West side.

We have very pleasant recollections of the Congregational church, a building forty feet square, on the corner of Church and Green streets, which was then attended by all the Congregationalists and Presbyterians on both sides of the river, as well as by many Unitarians. The New York friends of Kent and Brinckerhoff, who principally furnished the funds for the erection of the little church, knew but little of its power for good in laying the foundations of a prosperous Christian community. The attendance there embraced all the church-goers except the Baptists and Methodists. Let us go down to the ferry-boat Sunday morning, and see who come across the river. Among our acquaintances who attend this church are: Charles Works and family, James Works, Peter B. Johnson and James B. Johnson and their families, Gabriel Dunning and family, Deacon Ira Baker and family, Alfred P. Mather, Horace Foote, William E. Dunbar, Jason Marsh, Volney A. Marsh, James M. Wight, Charles H. Spafford, John Spafford, E. H. Potter, Herman Potter, Joel B. Potter, Asa Crosby, B. G. Wheeler, Dr. A.



M. Catlin, and their families; the Herrick family, Lewis Gregory, Judge Bela Shaw, William P. Dennis, Anson Barnum, Henry Silsby, Mr. Tinker, and H. Burrows and family. The statement was made some time ago that the first church bell used in Rockford was placed on the Presbyterian church. I do not know of any such bell; but I do know that Rev. Mr. Norton, who preceded Rev. William Curtis in the Congregational church, brought a bell and had it placed and used in that church. When he left, the church did not purchase it, and he took it away. I also know of a Meneely bell, weighing six hundred and forty pounds, which I purchased in New York. This was for the brick Congregational church on the corner of First and Walnut streets.

On North Main street a brick blacksmith's shop stood on the site of Louck's restaurant, occupied by Stephen Skinner, a good blacksmith, a man of strict integrity, and a deacon in the Congregational church. His residence was just north of the shop. On the west side of Main street, at the north end of the Winnebago House, Cyrus F. and Anson S. Miller had a law office. They were good lawyers. Anson S. was quite prominent as a politician. Adjoining their office, in the same building, Isaac Andrus had a small store. He was quite an active man in the First Baptist church. Where the Presbyterian church now stands, Michael Burns, a tailor, resided. He was always posted in the news of the town, attended closely to his business, and was active in church work. Near by was Austin Colton's residence, which may now be seen just north of the Presbyterian church. He was editor and proprietor of the *Rockford Forum*, a good weekly paper for the time, creditable to himself and to the village. On the north side of North street was John Beattie's residence, where his family still resides. Main street ended at William A. Talcott's residence. A road ran east about a block, then north, following about that distance from the river, to the entrance of Dr. Haskell's residence, fronting the river, now occupied by George Forbes. He selected the highest part of this ground, which slopes to the west, south and east. There were no buildings to obstruct, and it was a beautiful view, surrounded with an orchard of thrifty fruit trees. Apples were in great variety, early and late, and pears, peaches and plums just coming into bearing. I think it extended to Court street, and north to Fisher avenue. The Doctor was closely identified with the interests of the town. He had a fair

medical practice, from which he was retiring. It was the custom to be very generous in doses of medicine. His hand-made pills assured his patients that he had not called simply for a visit. As there were no dentists, the only remedy for aching, decayed teeth was to extract them, and that with turnkeys. All physicians were experts in this line of torture. The memory of experience in that line is not at all effaced by years. I made a friendly call at the house, and found Mrs. Haskell and her daughter preparing and knitting silk stockings for themselves. Silkworms had been fed from mulberry leaves grown on their own trees, and the silk wound and twisted from their cocoons. The daughter is the mother of Dr. F. H. and Willis Kimball. The family were genuine New Englanders, industrious and economical. There had been quite an excitement over growing mulberry trees, for ornamental, shade and fruit trees, and silk culture. They made a quick growth, but did not prove a profitable investment.

Following the river road from the Beattie grounds north, near the river bank, was a beautiful boulevard, of which we would be proud today. The next house was near T. D. Robertson's residence. Continuing north on Main street, was a house occupied by James Taylor, an industrious farmer. He did express work about town occasionally, with his oxen and cart. Farther north, on the line of Harlem avenue, near Auburn street, was a large two-story building, erected for a hotel by Charles Reed, who was so confident that the State road from Chicago to Galena would cross the river at this point, that he not only put up the hotel, but had a full section of land laid off into blocks and lots, and called his village Winnebago. In his opinion, it was a very unwise thing when the state road was laid across the river at Rockford. About the 20th of October we had a heavy snowstorm. We fitted up a lumber wagon box on a sleigh, took in a jolly company of young ladies and gentlemen, and had a genuine enjoyable sociable, or "sewing society," as it was then called, at the Reed house.

## CHAPTER XLVIII.

### THE SOCIAL LIFE OF ROCKFORD IN THE EARLY FORTIES.

THE aristocracy of a community is always founded upon what its people believe to be the chief good. Whenever the emphasis is placed upon noble family descent, the aristocracy is founded upon blood. If intellectual culture is the *summum bonum*, the charmed circle will be composed of artists, poets and literati. When money is considered the first object of pursuit, wealth will be the basis of aristocracy. In the social life of ancient Rome, the patricians were the descendants of the first settlers. From that day to this aristocracy has rested in a measure upon good birth. The fact that a man is well born is accepted as a letter of credit the wide world over.

The "open sesame" to good society in the early days of Rockford was not noble blood, nor culture, nor wealth. If any aristocracy had developed, it rested upon common respectability. The society of Rockford from fifty to sixty years ago was of the highest class. It was characterized by a delightful Arcadian simplicity. The settlers were not burdened with the care of large houses, and costly furniture, and expensive wardrobes. The axiom that one might as well be out of the world as out of fashion was the invention of a later date. It was not considered good form for a lady to make a formal afternoon call when she might suppose that the lady of the house would be absent, and leave her card with the maid, with solemn protestations of regret that the lady of the house was not at home. In fact, there were no domestics; hence the servant girl problem did not threaten domestic tranquility and the general welfare. Instead of a large number of calls in an afternoon, friends would make an afternoon and evening visit. Gentlemen were allowed at these functions. Meetings for benevolent purposes were held at private houses, and substantial refreshments were served which the guests could eat. Societies were then founded which still have an existence. Hospitality was of the true and genuine sort. A walk of two or three miles did not require much



effort, although there were no sidewalks nor street lamps. A hand lantern, brilliantly illuminated with a candle or oil lamp, and cheerful company, would dispel the most dense Egyptian darkness. Sometimes a little company would go in lumber wagons three to five miles into the country for a rehearsal of church music with a friend. The music and the social converse were alike enjoyable. Literary entertainments were occasionally given at the court house.

Weddings were not of very frequent occurrence; but they were the large social gatherings, and the invitations were quite general. The marriage of M. H. Regan and Miss Louisa Dewey occurred in 1845. He invited the young people to a wedding supper at the American House in Belvidere. They made quite an attractive appearance, writes Mr. Dickerman, as they started in their private conveyance. There were no top buggies or carriages in Rockford at that time.

The wedding of Charles H. Spafford and Miss Abby Warren was solemnized March 8, 1842, at the residence of Jason Marsh. The *Rockford Pilot* says the party was large and brilliant. The bride had come to Rockford in the autumn of 1841, to keep house for her brother, Edward Warren, the second postmaster of the village. Mr. Warren had built the upright part of the present residence of Dr. Lichty, on the corner of Third and Walnut streets. It was built of brick, and entirely finished in black walnut. Mrs. Spafford's father, Joseph Warren, was a son of Dr. John Warren, who was surgeon-general in Washington's army, and a brother of General Joseph Warren, who was killed at the battle of Bunker Hill. Mrs. Spafford's father received his education at Cambridge. His death occurred when his daughter was five years of age. Mrs. Spafford was also descended from Governor John Collins, the last colonial governor of Rhode Island. She was educated in the east and upon her settlement in Rockford she became prominent in the social life of the village. Her religious sympathies have always been with the Unitarian church.

May 20, 1845, Selden M. Church and Mrs. Mary Preston were united in marriage. Mr. Thurston gives this incident in his *Reminiscences*: "At one p. m. sharp that day, I drove up to the front of the Rockford House with 'Black Lucy,' the handsomest horse in the town, hitched in the shafts of an open buggy with wood axles, basswood dash, seat upholstered with a buffalo-robe, and clean harness—the best in town—from the livery of

Tyler & Thurston, which equipage I had in charge for the occasion, and handed the reins to the Judge. He was followed as he drove off by the benedictions of the assembly. We had no shoes to throw after them, as they were required for personal use, and rice had not yet come into vogue; but God-bless-yous and our best wishes did follow in the wake of the disappearing vehicle."

Isaiah Lyon and Mary Hitchcock were married March 31, 1841. The bride's father was Jonathan Hitchcock. He had recently built the brick house at 111 North First street, now occupied by E. S. Tebbetts as a residence and dental rooms. The bridal party were given a *charivari*. This is of French origin, and is said to have been introduced into the west by the settlers of that nationality at Kaskaskia.

There was considerable social intercourse between Rockford and the neighboring towns. The settlers of Belvidere and Rockford were of the same general class. Prof. Whitman, who was a stated supply at one time in one of the local pulpits, was widely known as a Baptist clergyman and educator. Mrs. Whitman and Mrs. R. S. Molony, also of Belvidere, were nieces of Miss Matilda Hoffman, the young lady to whom Washington Irving was engaged. She died in April, 1809, at the age of eighteen. By way of a digression it may be said that Irving slept with her Bible and prayer-book under his pillow, and they were his inseparable companions. His devotion to her memory caused him to remain a bachelor. In his private note-book he wrote: "She died in the beauty of her youth, and in my memory she will ever be young and beautiful." In St. Mark's Eve, in Bracebridge Hall, he plaintively says: "There are departed beings whom I have loved as I never again shall love in this world—who have loved me as I never again shall be loved!" Miss Hoffman died in the arms of Rebecca Gratz, a beautiful Jewess of Philadelphia. Irving visited Sir Walter Scott in 1817; and upon the strength of his vivid description of this lady, Sir Walter made her the heroine of *Ivanhoe*, Rebecca, the most romantic creation of female character that the author ever conceived.

Dr. Molony represented his district in congress from 1851 to 1853, as a Democrat. Chicago was then included in that district. Senator and Mrs. Stephen A. Douglas were occasional guests at the Molony home, which was a social centre in the neighboring village.



Mr. and Mrs. Abiram Morgan were leaders in social circles. Mrs. Morgan was one whom everybody esteemed. Her kindness, ready sympathy, genuine hospitality and superior housekeeping made her log-house as a palace-home, where all loved to visit; and the genius of the place remained to the third generation. Their grandchildren are Mrs. Underwood and Mrs. Ogden, daughters of Mr. and Mrs. Horsman. A third daughter died when a child, and was buried in a corner of the homestead grove, where her grave could be seen for many years. The remains were finally removed to the West side cemetery. A grandson of Mr. Horsman has developed literary talent, and he has written articles for the magazines, which have been published during the past year.

Mrs. Spafford says that among her first acquaintances were Mr. and Mrs. John W. Taylor. In their home was the essence of hospitality. Mr. Taylor was always the courtly and attentive host, and Mrs. Taylor lent a charm to whatever place she occupied by the sweetness and grace of her manner. Mr. Taylor is now residing in New York City. His sister was the first Mrs. T. D. Robertson.

James Mitchell was one of nature's noblemen. There were Francis Burnap, the ancient bachelor and astute lawyer, with his wig, which never quite covered the natural hair; Judge Shaw, an old-school gentleman; and David Penfield, whom many remember with respect. The three Potter brothers and their families left their impress upon the community until this day. The kindly nature and ready sympathy of Mrs. Alden Thomas endeared her to all her friends. Volney Marsh, with his tuning-fork and an old-fashioned singing-book, with which he kept time, was a familiar figure in the singing-gallery. "Brad" McKenney was quite a prominent character in those days. It has been said he was *heard* more in public than any other man in the community. He was known far and wide for his kindness of heart, and he would leave his business to nurse the sick whenever his services were needed.

The Sanford brothers, Albert, Robert, and Goodyear Asa, were representative society men. Robert died November 22, 1871, at Virginia City, Montana, aged fifty years. Mrs. A. C. Spafford, the first Mrs. John Spafford and Mrs. I. N. Cunningham were sisters. Mrs. W. P. Dennis was a fine housekeeper and a lady of refinement. Shepherd Leach was popular in social circles. Rev. William S. Curtis, pastor of the First Congrega-



tional church, was highly esteemed. His wife was Miss Martha Leach, a sister of Shepherd Leach. Jason Marsh was the "Beau" Brummell of his day. Rev. Lansing Porter had a wide personal acquaintance.

There was a scarcity of young society, and young ladies were at a premium. A well known young man of the village went quite a distance into the country to call upon some young ladies. The old gentleman, their father, arose from his chair at nine o'clock and announced that he was the last person up in the house, and that it was his time to retire.

Whatever may have been the differences between the East and West sides in business affairs, in the social life of the community there were no two sides of the river. A common feeling of sympathy made them one people. H. H. Waldo comments in this wise upon Rockford society in the forties and fifties: "Society was free from artificial distinctions. The pioneer days were the red-letter days of my life. I would like to live them over again. There was a more fraternal feeling among men in the same line of business. Competition was not so strong. The popular amusements were instructive as well as entertaining."

The larger number of social distinctions are natural rather than artificial. Friendships are formed upon the basis of social affinity, which is as truly a natural law as chemical affinity. The public ball was one of the popular amusements among a class of residents of the olden time. These balls were usually held at the Rockford House, the Washington House, or the Winnebago House. Christmas and New Year's were usually chosen for these events. Guests came from considerable distance. At a "union" ball held at the Winnebago House, January 22, 1845, managers were elected from Rockford, Whig Hill, Beloit, Roscoe, Belvidere, Cleveland, Byron, Grand Detour, Oregon, Dixon, and Charleston. The sporting element has been admirably portrayed by Mr. Thurston, in his *Reminiscences*. They have the genuine flavor of an interesting phase of life in a new community. Hunting and fishing were favorite pastimes. Barn-raisings were seasons of social interest as well as of mutual helpfulness. Occasionally a marriage would be followed by a *charivari*, which, happily, has become obsolete in civilized communities.

## CHAPTER XLIX.

### PREDOMINANCE OF THE NEW ENGLAND TYPE IN EARLY ROCKFORD.

EMERSON observes that an institution is the lengthened shadow of one man; as, the Reformation of Luther; Methodism, of Wesley; and that all history resolves itself into the biography of a few stout and earnest persons. Thus, he says, "events grow on the same stem with persons; are sub-persons." The larger number of the early settlers of Rockford came from New England. Some emigrated from New York and other states, but the New England element predominated. These pioneers impressed their personality upon this community, and it has remained until this day. The New Englanders, in their native home, were a homogeneous race; even the Chinese were scarcely more so. With the exception of a few Huguenot families, who came from the old world at the close of the seventeenth century, and who, from religious sympathy and other causes, were easily grafted on the primeval vine, they were all descendants of English stock.

Industry, thrift, and a high sense of personal honor are prominent traits in the typical son of New England. Soil and climate determine in some measure the character of a people. The rocky soil of New England required the husbandman to practice the virtue of industry. In a speech given at a dinner of the Pilgrim Society in Plymouth, in 1855, Wendell Phillips gave this unique characterization of the Puritans: "How true it is that the Puritans originated no new truth! How true it is, also, Mr. President, that it is not truth which agitates the world. Plato in the groves of the Academy sounded on and on to the utmost depth of philosophy, but Athens was quiet. Calling around him the choicest minds of Greece, he pointed out the worthlessness of their altars and the sham of public life, but Athens was quiet,—it was all *speculation*. When Socrates walked the streets of Athens, and, questioning every-day life, struck the altar till the faith of the passer-by faltered, it came close to ACTION, and immediately they gave him hemlock, for the city was turned upside down. I might find a better illustra-

tion in the streets of Jerusalem. What the Puritans gave the world was not thought, but ACTION. Europe had ideas, but she was letting '*I dare not wait upon I would,*' like the cat in the adage. The Puritans, with native pluck, launched out into the deep sea. Men, who called themselves thinkers, had been creeping along the Mediterranean, from headland to headland, in their timidity; the Pilgrims launched boldly out into the Atlantic, and trusted God. That is the claim they have upon posterity. It was ACTION that made them what they were."

That which is purchased at the greatest cost is usually the most highly treasured; and thus the industrious farmer and artisan became frugal. It was a point of honor with a true New Englander to maintain his family and pay his debts. This he could not do except by a persevering industry, and a methodical and prudent management of his affairs. He must be economical if he would be generous, or even just; for extravagance sooner or later weakens the sense of moral obligation. These traits of industry and thrift were pleasantly satirized many years ago by a southern writer, in the following paragraph: "We of the south are mistaken in the character of these people, when we think of them only as peddlers in horn flints and bark nutmegs. Their energy and enterprise are directed to all objects, great and small, within their reach. At the fall of a scanty rivulet, they set up their little manufactory of wooden buttons or combs; they plant a barren hillside with broomcorn, and make it into brooms at the bottom,—and on its top they erect a windmill. Thus, at a single spot, you may set the air, the earth and the water all working for them. But, at the same time, the ocean is whitened to its extremities with the sails of their ships, and the land is covered with their works of art and usefulness."

The early New Englanders have been charged with coldness and severity of manner. For an austere people, however, they have been easily enkindled with noble enthusiasms. There are certain traits prominent in their type of character, such as their love of order and the habit of self-control, which hasty observers have mistaken for tokens of a want of earnestness. But seldom, if ever, has there been a more sublime rage than was shown near Boston, in April, 1775, and for eight years thereafter. The accusation most frequently repeated against those stalwart people is that of religious intolerance. Christian charity, however, has been a slow and painful evolution through the centu-



ries; and the New Englander was but a sharer in the world-wide spirit of intolerance. Perhaps they held their spinal columns too rigidly erect, and carried their heads too high to view with tender sympathy the weak and sinful world about them. Nevertheless, they bore aloft the standard of righteousness before a lawless generation, and planted in the new world the seeds of patient, practical and self-denying morality. Their posterity have sold their birthright for the pottage of license and disregard of the moral law. Whatever of justice there may be in the strictures upon those ancient worthies, it may be observed that no Channing, nor Sumner, nor Garfield has ever been nurtured in the atmosphere of a Sunday beer-garden.

When Judah was in exile in Babylon, her prophet Ezekiel had a vision of a brighter day. "Afterward he brought me again unto the door of the house; and behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward; for the forefront of the house stood toward the east, and the waters came down from under, from the right side of the house, at the south side of the altar." This river was primarily a symbol of the transformation that should be wrought in Canaan to make it a fit dwelling-place for the ransomed of the Lord who should return to Zion. A feature of Messianic prophecy is the promise of the renewal of nature and the reconstruction of society. In the prophet's vision, the stream of blessing proceeded from the temple of Jehovah; and the virtue of its waters was received as they flowed by the altar of sacrifice. In the mind of the devout Hebrew, Jehovah was always to be found in his visible sanctuary. The Lord was in his holy temple. So the institutions of an enlightened civilization have proceeded from the Christian church, through the sacrifice of the noble men and women of the past, who have served her with a lover's devotion. The early colleges of this land, with very few exceptions, were the offspring of the church, and consecrated by its prayers.

It could not be said that every settler of Rockford belonged to the highest class; but the determining force in the community came from those high ideals of culture and religion, and those habits of economy, industry, integrity and temperance which have made the true Englander a representative of the best elements in our civilization. It was ordained in the beginning that seed should bring forth fruit after its kind. It is none the less true in social and moral life. The moral status of a city or country as truly indicates the character of its pioneers, as

the rich, ripe fruit of the vineyard tells the secret of its seed and culture.

Hon. R. R. Hitt, in an address delivered in August, 1899, before the old settlers of Seward in this county, said the statement that the early settlers builded wiser than they knew, was a reflection upon their intelligence. He insisted that the pioneers knew what they were doing, and had some conception of the outcome. Certain it is that whatever Winnebago county is today, is directly traceable to their agency. They have been the architects of her institutions. They laid broad and deep the foundations of her industrial, educational, moral and religious interests, and from time to time they have superintended the superstructure. The large majority of this vanguard have ceased from their labors, and their works do follow them. As the few who remain behold the institutions of learning that have been reared in every town, and the resources provided for the humblest as well as for the strongest; as they look over the prairies reclaimed from barrenness and barbarism through their toil and privations; as they consider the various religious influences that are quietly softening and humanizing the moral nature, they have the satisfaction of knowing that they have not lived in vain.

There is a tendency in this age to remove the ancient landmarks which the fathers have set. The sabbath has lost much of its former sanctity. Parental authority has become a lost art, or a lost virtue; and there has been a widespread insubordination to constituted authority; and the mad chase for wealth has established false standards of worth, and weakened the moral fibre of the people. These are not the reflections of a pessimist, but the conclusions of the casual observer. If this republic is to endure, there must be a speedy return to the homely virtues and the high ideals of the fathers. "For where-soever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together." In the Old Testament the eagle, or the bird of prey, represents a foreign army summoned by Jehovah to execute his chastisement upon a corrupt nation. The interpretation is this: Wherever there is corruption, there will be inflicted the judgments of him who rules in righteousness.

## CHAPTER L.

### RIVER AND HARBOR CONVENTION.—WINNEBAGO COUNTY DELEGATES.

PRIOR to 1846 Chicago was a port of delivery only, and belonged to the district of Detroit. The former city was made a port of entry by act of congress in 1846. Some improvements had been made in the harbor previous to 1839, when the work was discontinued for want of funds. A bar had formed, which extended across the entrance of the channel, so that vessels could enter only in fair weather, and even then with considerable difficulty. It was only in response to the unremitting efforts of citizens, by memorials and personal influence, during the years 1839-41, that congress, in 1843, appropriated twenty-five thousand dollars to continue the improvements. The next year thirty thousand dollars additional were appropriated for the same purpose. Up to this time two hundred and forty-seven thousand dollars had been expended; yet the harbor was still incomplete, if not positively dangerous. John Wentworth, Chicago's able representative in congress, had secured the incorporation of another appropriation in the river and harbor bill of 1846, by a decisive majority; but President Polk interposed his veto.

The president and the minority in congress were thus committed against the policy of river and harbor improvement. This course provoked general criticism, and especially in the west; and resulted in the call for the famous river and harbor convention, which met in July, 1847. It was one of the most notable events of the period. Preliminary conferences had been held in Chicago, Detroit, Buffalo, and New York, and such encouragement had been received that a meeting was held in Chicago, November 13, 1846, to complete the arrangements for the convention. William Moseley Hall, who took the initiative in calling the convention, was from 1845 to 1848, agent at St. Louis of the Lake Steamship Association, connecting by Frink, Walker & Company's stage lines, and later by Illinois and Michigan canal packets, with Illinois river steamers to St. Louis.



The convention assembled in Chicago July 5, 1847. Delegates were present from eighteen out of the twenty-nine states of the union. New York sent over three hundred ; and still larger numbers came from Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin, Indiana and Illinois. The total attendance was estimated to be from six to ten thousand. Many of the leading men of the nation were present. Among them were Thomas Corwin, William Bebb, Stanley Matthews, Schuyler Colfax, David Dudley Field, Thurlow Weed, and Horace Greeley. Thirty-five counties in Illinois sent delegates. Abraham Lincoln was one of the number. Mr. Lincoln was the only Whig representative in congress from the state. He at this time made his first visit to its commercial metropolis. Chicago was then a city of fifteen thousand population.

The delegates assembled in a spacious pavilion. Edward Bates, of Missouri, presided, with vice-presidents from seventeen states. The vice-president from Illinois was Charles S. Hempstead. The convention continued in session three days. In his report of the proceedings, Thurlow Weed pronounced it "a larger deliberative body than had ever been assembled in this country." Letters generally favorable to the avowed objects of the convention were read from Daniel Webster, Thomas H. Benton, Henry Clay, Martin Van Buren, and others.

Both of the leading parties sought to make political capital out of the event. It was only with the utmost adroitness that partisan dissensions were prevented. This feat was difficult, because the occasion of the convention was a political act by a partisan president. Tuesday, David Dudley Field, a Democrat, addressed the convention ; and in the afternoon of the same day Jason Marsh, of Rockford, introduced the following resolution : "Resolved, That the delegates to this convention are pained at the expression of ill-feeling evinced this morning during the time that David Dudley Field, of New York, occupied (by invitation) the stand ; and in future pledge themselves to regard the rights of all members of the convention, who confine themselves to the rules prescribed and passed by this convention."

Another resolution, introduced by S. Treat, of Missouri, provided "that no proposition or remarks, not directly connected with recognized river and harbor improvements of a national character, shall be entertained by this convention."

The resolutions adopted enthusiastically asserted that it

was the right and duty of the general government to facilitate commerce by improving harbors, and clearing out navigable rivers; and that theretofore appropriations made for the improvement of inter-oceanic rivers and lakes had not been in fair proportion to those made for the benefit of the Atlantic coast. A resolution in favor of a railroad from the states to the Pacific, introduced by William Moseley Hall, was also adopted. The closing speech was delivered by the president, Edward Bates, which tradition has pronounced "a masterpiece of American oratory theretofore unexcelled." No report of this great oration has been preserved.

Winnebago county was represented at this convention by thirty delegates, as follows: Daniel S. Haight, Anson S. Miller, S. G. Armor, Thomas D. Robertson, William Hulin, Spencer Post, Charles H. Spafford, O. Jewett, J. A. Wilson, Jason Marsh, Newton Crawford, Cyrus F. Miller, Goodyear A. Sanford, W. A. Dickerman, R. R. Comstock, Jesse Blinn, J. B. Peterson, Austin Colton, Shepherd Leach, C. A. Huntington, J. M. Wight, J. B. Johnson, Samuel Cunningham, Horace Miller, E. M. Miller, W. P. Dennis, H. Barross, D. Corey, M. H. Regan, Dr. Carpenter.

The most complete report of this historic convention is published in Fergus' Historical Series, Number Eighteen, which devotes about two hundred pages to the subject. Several numbers of this work, which have now become rare and valuable, may be found in the Rockford public library.

## CHAPTER LI.

### THE "REFORM" OF THE JUDICIARY.—CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION.

UNDER the first constitution of Illinois, the justices of the supreme court and the judges of the inferior courts were elected by the joint ballot of the legislature. This system made the courts in a sense the creatures of the legislature, rather than a co-ordinate branch of the government. The legislature is always governed more or less by partisan expediency; and the reflex action upon the judiciary compromised its independence. Two celebrated instances may be briefly noted.

When Thomas Carlin became governor, as a Democrat, in 1838, he claimed the power of appointing a new secretary of state, without a vacancy existing in that office. Alexander P. Field, a Whig, had served in that capacity during the two preceding administrations. Governor Carlin based his right of appointment upon the doctrine that a secretary of state under the first constitution was a confidential adviser of the governor, and ought therefore to be of the same political faith. The Governor accordingly nominated John A. McClernand. The senate, although Democratic, passed a resolution to the effect that the governor did not possess the power to nominate a secretary, except in case of a vacancy. After adjournment the Governor again appointed Mr. McClernand, secretary of state, who thereupon demanded possession of the office from Secretary Field. The latter refused. Mr. McClernand then filed an information in the nature of a *quo warranto*, before Judge Breese, in the circuit court of Fayette county, who decided in favor of the complainant. Secretary Field took an appeal to the supreme court, where the cause was reversed. There were then four justices of the supreme court. Justice Smith was a Democrat, and Chief-Justice Wilson and Justices Lockwood and Brown were Whigs. Three opinions were written. Justices Wilson and Lockwood concurred; Justice Smith dissented; and Justice Brown declined to sit in the cause, because he was a relative of Mr. McClernand. Chief-Justice Wilson rendered the decision of the court, which held that the Governor could not remove the



secretary of state at pleasure; that when an appointment had been made, the appointing power was suspended until a vacancy occurred. The decision was the cause of a partisan outcry against the so-called "Whig court," because it prevented a Democrat from holding one of the principal offices of the government. This opinion was contrary to the principle generally accepted at this day, that the appointing power, when exercised by a single person, or by a body of men who can conveniently act, necessarily possesses the power of removal from office.

The second and far more important instance was the celebrated Galena alien case. The alien vote of the state was about ten thousand; and it was estimated that nine-tenths of this vote was Democratic; and if they were excluded from the polls in 1840, it would determine the presidential election in favor of the Whigs. The constitution of 1818 provided that "in all elections, all white male inhabitants above the age of twenty-one years, having resided in the state six months next preceding the election, shall enjoy the right of an elector." The Whigs had long contended that this provision did not authorize any but citizens to vote; while the practice, ever since the constitution was adopted, had uniformly been to allow all residents, whether citizens or aliens, to vote, who had resided in the state six months. In order to test the right of aliens to vote, without naturalization, an agreed case was instituted at Galena, where there was a large alien vote in the mining district, between two Whigs, to recover the penalty of one hundred dollars, under the election law of 1829, because the defendant, who had acted as judge at the August election of 1838, had received the vote of an alien. Judge Dan. Stone, before whom the case was tried, decided that an alien was not entitled to the elective franchise, and therefore imposed the fine prescribed by the statute. The decision had great political significance, because it was believed by both parties that the alien vote of the state held the balance of power.

An appeal was taken to the supreme court, where it was argued at the December term, 1839, and then continued to the June term, 1840, when the exciting presidential campaign was in progress. If the case were decided adversely to the aliens, the state might be lost to the Democracy, and there was a general apprehension that such would be the decision. Judge Smith, the only Democratic justice then on the supreme bench, discovered a clerical error in the record. A motion to dismiss

was thereupon founded, because it appeared by the record that the case argued was alleged to have occurred at a time when no general election could be held, namely, August, 6, 1839. The year 1838 was meant. For the purpose of correcting the record, a continuance was granted to the December term, which was subsequent to the presidential election, which was held in November. The achievement of discovering the flaw in the record was considered a remarkable stroke of legal acumen. When the case was called for final decision, the constitutional question of the right of an alien to vote was evaded, and it was decided that inasmuch as the alien, whose vote was in question, by admission of both parties, possessed all the qualifications required by the law of 1829, the court erred in imposing the penalty. In the meantime, the November election in 1840 was held. Both houses of the legislature were largely Democratic, and Stephen A. Douglas was made secretary of state.

During the progress of these proceedings, a bill had been introduced for the reorganization of the judiciary. Two great political questions had been brought before the supreme court: one had already been decided against the wishes of the Democratic party, and it was thought the other, still pending, would be decided in the same way. The Democrats proceeded to radical measures of redress. Mr. Douglas, who had been one of the counsel for the aliens, boldly charged in a speech before the lobby, that the main question had been purposely evaded by the court, in order to conciliate the Democrats, and defeat the bill. By an act of February 10, 1841, the general assembly legislated out of office the nine circuit judges, and increased the number of supreme court justices from four to nine. In addition to their duties as a supreme court, and their function as a council of revision, the law imposed upon them all the circuit court business of the state. Since 1835 the supreme justices had been relieved of circuit duty, and acted solely as a court of appeals, errors and revision. The change was an extreme partisan measure, and characterized by Governor Ford as "confessedly violent, and somewhat revolutionary." Before its approval the bill was presented to the council of revision, which returned it with its objections. The bill, however, was repassed, notwithstanding the objections of the council, in the senate by a large majority, and in the house by a majority of one. A protest was signed by a minority, among whom was Abraham Lincoln. The five additional supreme court justices



elected by the legislature under this law were Sidney Breeze, Walder B. Scates, Samuel H. Treat, Stephen A. Douglas, and Thomas Ford, who had been judge of the circuit which included Rockford. All these justices were Democrats. Thereafter all Democratic apprehensions were allayed concerning the party vote, nor did the majority of that court question the right of the executive to appoint his own secretary of state.

At the session of 1842-43 an effort was made to remove Judge Thomas C. Brown, on the ground of incompetency. He had been a member of the supreme court since the adoption of the constitution in 1818. Judge Brown was a genial gentleman, but he possessed no legal attainments. Upon the reorganization of the court, Judge Brown, whose home was at Shawneetown, was assigned to the remote Galena circuit, in the hope that he would resign. This plan failed; and four lawyers, Charles S. Hempstead, Thomas Drummond, Thompson Campbell and A. L. Holmes, filed specifications that he had not natural strength of intellect, and lacked the legal training requisite to a proper discharge of the duties of his high office. The senate refused to participate in the examination of these charges, and the house finally asked to be discharged from further consideration of the subject.

In 1847 another attempt was made to remove Judge Brown. A petition was numerously signed by the bar and citizens of Rockford. This petition, with all the signatures attached, has been preserved. Judge Brown, however, retained his position, and remained upon the bench until the reorganization of the supreme court under the constitution of 1848.

These two decisions of the supreme court were notable events in the evolution of an elective judiciary in Illinois. Under the present system, the entire judiciary of the state is elected by the people. More than a century ago Alexander Hamilton said in the *Federalist*: "The standard of good behavior for the continuance in office of the judicial magistracy, is certainly one of the most valuable of the modern improvements in the practice of government. In a monarchy, it is an excellent barrier to the despotism of the prince; in a republic, it is a no less excellent barrier to the encroachments and oppressions of the representative body. And it is the best expedient which can be devised in any government, to secure a steady, upright and impartial administration of the laws." Under the elective system, however, a precedent has been established of continuing a judge in



office during "good behavior." Thus an elective judiciary is essentially consistent with the philosophy of Hamilton. Moreover, the judiciary, which in Hamilton's time was considered the weakest department of the government, has become recognized as a co-ordinate branch, deriving its powers, as do the legislative and the executive, from a popular constitution; and has attained its present position of honor and public confidence.

In pursuance of an act of the general assembly, approved February 20, 1847, a constitutional convention assembled at Springfield, June 7th of the same year. The delegates from Winnebago county were Selden M. Church and Robert J. Cross. The delegates from the neighboring county of Boone were Dr. Daniel H. Whitney and Stephen A. Hurlbut, both of whom were well known in Rockford at an early date. The Journal of Proceedings indicate that all of these gentlemen took part in the discussions. Upon the organization of the convention, Mr. Church was appointed a member of the standing committee on the organization of departments and offices connected with the executive department; Mr. Cross, a member of the committee on the bill of rights; Mr. Hurlbut, on the judiciary department; and Dr. Whitney, on incorporations.

Early in the session Mr. Church introduced the following resolution: "*Resolved*, That the committee on the bill of rights be requested to inquire into the expediency of so amending the sixth article of the present constitution that it shall provide that 'there shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in this state, otherwise than for the punishment of crimes whereof the parties shall have been duly convicted. Nor shall any person be deprived of liberty on account of color.'" June 26th Mr. Cross introduced the following resolution: "*Resolved*, That the committee on elections and the right of suffrage be instructed to inquire into the expediency of changing the time of holding elections from the first Monday in August to the Tuesday next after the first Monday in November, and the manner of voting from *vive voce* to ballot." Mr. Cross also led in an effort to secure in the new constitution a provision for a state superintendent of schools, with a liberal salary.

The convention continued in session until August 31st, when the new constitution was adopted. It was ratified by the people March 6, 1848, and in force from April 1st next following. The adoption of this new constitution was a notable event

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in the transition of Illinois from a primitive, pioneer state to a great commonwealth. Many changes were made. A section, introduced by Mr. Hurlbut, of Boone, provided for township organization in the counties, whenever desired. The time of holding the general elections was changed from August to November; the method of voting changed from *vive voce* to ballot; the judiciary was made elective; and many improvements were made along other lines. This constitution remained in force until 1870. A new constitution was adopted in convention in 1862, but it was rejected by the people. The delegate from Winnebago county to this convention was Porter Sheldon, a brother of C. W. Sheldon, of Rockford.

## CHAPTER LII.

### THE GALENA AND CHICAGO UNION : THE FIRST RAILROAD.

JANUARY 16, 1836, a charter was granted to the Galena & Chicago Union Railroad Company, to construct a railroad with a single or double track, from Galena to Chicago. The capital stock was to be one hundred thousand dollars, with the privilege of increase to a sum not exceeding one million dollars. William Bennett, Thomas Drummond, J. C. Goodhue, Peter Semple, J. M. Turner, E. D. Taylor, and J. B. Thomas, Jr., were made commissioners for receiving subscriptions to the capital stock. At that time Galena was the leading village of this western country. This fact explains the precedence given to that name in the title of the road. The company was given three years in which to commence operations. Either animal or steam-power might be used. The charter was obtained mainly through the influence of Ebenezer Peck and T. W. Smith. The Galena & Chicago Union was the first railroad chartered to be built from Chicago, upon which work was immediately begun. The road became an important factor in the great transportation system of Chicago, as well as the towns along the line.

Thirteen months after the charter was granted, the survey of the proposed route was begun by an engineer, James Seymour, and was extended from the foot of North Dearborn street as far as the Des Plaines river. Work was suspended in June, 1838, but resumed the following year, and piles were driven along the line of Madison street, and stringers placed upon them. It soon became evident, however, that Chicago's financial strength was not equal to her ambition, and the enterprise was temporarily abandoned. The suspension of operations was a source of profound regret to the citizens of the Rock River valley, who had made several attempts to obtain better connection with Chicago, first by means of the contemplated road, and later by canal. These schemes did not prove feasible, and other plans were substituted.



The agitation was continued in Winnebago county for several years. The first railroad meeting in Rockford was held November 28, 1845. Anson S. Miller was chosen chairman, and Selden M. Church, secretary. The meeting was addressed by Hon. Martin P. Sweet. It was resolved that those counties interested in the construction of a railroad from Galena to Chicago be recommended to send delegates to a convention to be held in Rockford, January 7, 1846, for the purpose of taking measures for the construction of the road at the earliest possible time. Jason Marsh, T. D. Robertson, and William Hulin were appointed a corresponding committee to carry out the object of the meeting. The following delegates were appointed to attend the convention from Winnebago county: Horace Miller, A. C. Gleason, Robert Barrett, Harvey Gregory, Robert J. Cross, Asa Farnsworth, Stephen Mack, Thomas B. Talcott, Leman Pettibone, Guy Hulett, Snyder J. Fletcher, Alonzo Hall, Daniel Baker, E. S. Cable, Harvey Woodruff, Joseph Manchester, George Haskell, Willard Wheeler, E. H. Potter, Newton Crawford, J. C. Goodhue, S. M. Church, Anson Miller, Jason Marsh, and T. D. Robertson.

December 5, 1845, a meeting was held in Chicago to select delegates to the Rockford convention. Mayor A. Garrett presided, and Isaac N. Arnold was secretary. The meeting was addressed by J. Y. Scammon, of Chicago, and William Baldwin, of Boston. The following delegates were chosen to attend the convention at Rockford: Isaac N. Arnold, J. Y. Scammon, J. B. F. Russell, Mark Skinner, Thomas Dyer, E. W. Tracy, John Daulin, Stephen F. Gale, William H. Brown, Walter L. Newberry, William E. Jones, Bryan W. Raymond, F. C. Sherman, William Jones, Mayor A. Garrett. Meetings were held at Belvidere December 20th, and at Freeport December 25th, for the selection of delegates to the convention.

The convention was held at Rockford January 7, 1846. Delegates were present from the counties proposed to be traversed by the line. Cook county sent sixteen delegates; De Kalb, one; McHenry, fifteen; Rock, three; Ogle, eighty; Boone, forty-two; Lee, one; Kane, fifteen; Stephenson, forty; Winnebago, one hundred; Jo Daviess, six; a total of three hundred and nineteen delegates. It will be observed that Winnebago, and probably other counties, sent a larger delegation than had been authorized by the preliminary meeting. The convention was called to order at twelve o'clock, by T. D. Robertson, who

nominated I. N. Arnold for temporary chairman. Mr. Robertson was chosen secretary, pro tem. The committee appointed to nominate permanent officers presented the following report: Thomas Drummond, of Jo Daviess, president; William H. Brown, of Cook; Joel Walker, of Boone; Spooner Ruggles, of Ogle; Elijah Wilcox, of Kane, vice-presidents; T. D. Robertson, of Winnebago; J. B. Russell, of Cook; S. P. Hyde, of McHenry, secretaries.

The president, on taking the chair, addressed the meeting on the great importance of the outcome to northern Illinois and the northwest, and expressed the hope that all their transactions might be characterized by an intelligent view of the situation. J. Y. Scammon, of Cook, offered a resolution that a committee of one from each county be appointed to report resolutions which would express the views of the convention. The chair appointed the following committee: J. Y. Scammon, of Cook; George T. Kasson, of McHenry; Charles S. Hempstead, of Jo Daviess; M. G. Dana, of Ogle; James S. Waterman, of DeKalb; William H. Gilman, of Boone. John A. Clark, of Stephenson; A. B. Wells, of Kane; S. M. Church, of Winnebago; L. G. Fisher, of Wisconsin Territory. Walter L. Newberry, of Chicago, offered the following: "*Resolved*, If a satisfactory arrangement can be made with the present holders of the stock of the Galena & Chicago Union Railroad Company, that the members of this convention will use all honorable measures to obtain subscriptions to the stock of said company."

An animated debate followed; and after a full discussion of the powers of the charter and possible benefits, the resolution was adopted by an overwhelming vote.

The following resolutions, presented by J. Young Scammon, in behalf of the committee appointed for that purpose, reported the following resolutions, which were adopted without a dissenting vote:

"*Resolved*, That the wants of the farmers and business men of northern Illinois require the immediate construction of a railroad from Chicago to Galena. That the value of farms upon the route would be doubled by the construction of the road, and the convenience of the inhabitants immeasurably profited thereby.

"*Resolved*, That in order to accomplish the object of this convention, it is indispensably necessary that the inhabitants and owners of property between Galena and Chicago should



come forward and subscribe to the stock of the proposed railroad, to the extent of their ability; and that if each farmer upon the route shall take at least one share of the stock (one hundred dollars), the completion of the road would be placed beyond contingency."

This action enkindled enthusiasm along the entire line, but before the necessary subscriptions had been secured, Messrs. Townsend and Mather, who owned the original charter, offered the same, together with the land and such improvements as had already been made, to the citizens of Chicago, for the sum of twenty thousand dollars. The terms contemplated the payment of the entire sum in stock of the new company; ten thousand dollars immediately after the election and organization of the board of directors, and the remaining ten thousand dollars on the completion of the road to Rock river, or as soon as dividends of six per cent. had been earned. This proposition was accepted. The purchasers subscribed from their own means for the expense of the survey on December 6, 1846, and the following year the work was begun, under the supervision of Richard P. Morgan.

It was decided to open subscription books at Chicago and at Galena, as well as the several settlements through which the road was to pass. The task of canvassing among the farmers between the proposed termini was undertaken by William B. Ogden. J. Young Scammon solicited funds in Chicago, but the subscriptions came in slowly. Only twenty thousand dollars were obtained at the outset from all the real estate men and others who might have been supposed to have been especially interested. Certain business men in Chicago opposed the construction of the road on the ground that it might divert business from Chicago to other points along the line. Mr. Ogden met with better success in the rural districts. Even the women were willing to undergo many privations of a personal character, that they might assist in the construction of an iron highway, which they believed would prove of great benefit to the succeeding generations. The citizens of Rockford and farmers in the adjoining districts made liberal subscriptions to stock. John A. Holland and T. D. Robertson were the most active local promoters of the enterprise.

The original plan was to secure as large a local subscription to the capital stock as possible, and then apply to eastern capitalists for such advances, either in the form of subscriptions to



capital stock or loans, as might be found necessary. The interest in the enterprise, however, was such that by April 1, 1848, one hundred and twenty-six subscribers had taken three hundred and fifty-one thousand and eight hundred dollars' worth of stock. It was therefore concluded that the road should be constructed and owned by residents of the territory through which it was to pass. It was determined, however, to interview friends of the project in the east, to obtain such suggestions as their experience in railroad matters might enable them to give. Eastern capitalists advised the construction of the road as far as the subscription might be available; and later, if money were needed, it might be obtained in the east. There was another factor in the problem. Illinois was burdened with an enormous debt, and repudiation had been imminent. Eastern capitalists were therefore not prompt in response to calls for loans to be expended in internal improvements.

In September, 1847, a corps of engineers was engaged for surveys, and work was begun. Unexpected obstacles were encountered, and it was impossible for the directors to make the first contract for construction until near the close of the year. Contracts for the grading and bridging of twenty-five additional miles were made in March, 1848. Meanwhile, in February, 1847, an amended charter had been secured, under the terms of which a new board of directors was elected April 5th of the following year. Changes were subsequently made as follows: Thomas D. Robertson, of Rockford, was elected director, *vice* Allen Robbins, resigned, April 5, 1849; Dexter A. Knowlton, of Freeport, *vice* J. Y. Scammon, resigned, in 1850.

The canvass for subscriptions made along the line by Mr. Ogden was subsequently supplemented by Charles Walker, Isaac N. Arnold, John Locke Scripps and John B. Turner. In 1848 B. W. Raymond and John B. Turner visited the seaboard to enlist eastern support in the project. The journey was not as successful as they had hoped; yet they reported to Chicago subscriptions for fifteen thousand dollars' worth of stock and the promise of a loan of seven thousand dollars additional. The financial success of the enterprise seemed to be so far assured by this time that the management purchased a limited amount of rolling-stock.

Mr. Ogden, the president of the company, and also a member of the city council of Chicago, endeavored in the latter capacity to secure the passage of an ordinance giving the com-

pany the right of way into the city, with other incidental privileges. The ordinance failed to pass, but the road was granted the privilege of constructing a temporary track, in order to facilitate the hauling of necessary material through the city. The first civil engineer of the reorganized company was John Van Nortwick, and in June, 1848, his assistant, George W. Waite, drove the first grading peg, at the corner of Kinsie and Halsted streets.

In September, 1848, the directors purchased two engines from eastern companies. The first, the Pioneer, arrived in Chicago October 10th following. They were clumsy in appearance and workmanship; but they rendered efficient service. The Pioneer was unloaded from the brig Buffalo, on the Sunday following its arrival in Chicago. It proved to be a memorable purchase. At first it ran simply as a motor for hauling material for construction; but December 15, 1848, it started from Chicago at the head of the first train which left the city over the four miles of track. In the rear of the Pioneer were six freight cars, extemporized into passenger coaches. The engineer in charge was John Ebbert. As the road developed, Mr. Ebbert was promoted until he became master mechanic of the road. His death occurred in Chicago August 21, 1899, at the age of eighty-five years. The first engineer, however, who ran the Pioneer as far west as Rockford was I. D. Johnson. In 1854 Mr. Johnson was married to Miss Delia, a daughter of Samuel Gregory. To them were born six children, three of whom survived the father. Mr. Johnson died at his home in Chicago, February 24, 1899, and was buried in Rockford. He was a man of straightforward character, and as an engineer he was careful and courageous. The Pioneer was on exhibition at the world's Columbian exposition in 1893, under the charge of its former master, Engineer Ebbert, and attracted great attention as an example of primitive ideas in locomotive construction. It is now an exhibit at the Field Columbian Museum.

The line was extended to Elgin, forty miles west, in January, 1850. Nearly one hundred and sixty-five thousand dollars had been expended for construction up to that time. The rolling-stock was then an object of admiration; but it is now only of interest as a relic of the day of small things. The track was laid as far west as Belvidere in the spring of 1852. On Monday, August 2, 1852, a train on the Galena & Chicago Union railroad arrived in East Rockford. Its advent was signalized by the



ringing of bells and the firing of cannon. The iron horse was greeted by the populace as the successor of the horse and wagon and oxen and driver and whip. From that day Rockford began to make rapid strides in wealth, population, and commercial importance; and the *Forum* took the flattering unction to its soul that Chicago and Galena might be soon "looking this way with a jealous eye lest they become eclipsed in greatness by the city of the Rock river valley."

By the year 1857 quite an extension of the line had been completed. A double track had been extended thirty miles west, as far as Turner Junction, and large additions to the rolling stock had been acquired. The expense thus incurred increased the total outlay up to that time to nine million dollars. Before the close of 1858 the company had extended its main line to Freeport, one hundred and twenty miles from Chicago. Notwithstanding the fact that there was no little enthusiasm in Galena over the extension of the line to that point, Fate decreed that Galena should be connected with Chicago by another line. The Galena & Chicago Union sold its right of way to the Illinois Central. It has been said that had the great Central system made a connection with Rockford at that early date, the population of the city would have been materially increased. At the close of 1858 the Galena & Chicago Union company was free from a floating debt; but it had a funded indebtedness of three million seven hundred and eighty-three thousand and fifteen dollars.

The system owned and operated by the Chicago & Northwestern Railway Company, as it exists at the present time, is a consolidation of not less than forty-five distinct roads. June 2, 1864, was effected a consolidation of the Galena & Chicago Union and the Chicago & Northwestern companies, under the name of the Chicago & Northwestern Railway Company. The old Galena & Chicago Union had been legitimately built, and was never bonded; and when it was purchased by the Chicago & Northwestern, the stock held by the old subscribers in the Galena road was exchanged for stock in the new company. The consolidation was effected by the late Samuel J. Tilden, one of the greatest railroad lawyers of his time. The Galena had been a profitable road; and its consolidation was one of the first in northern Illinois.



## CHAPTER LIII.

### REPRESENTATIVE ROCKFORD CITIZENS: 1842-50.

MARSHALL H. REGAN was born in Rochester, New York, and his early life was spent in his native state and in Canada. Mr. Regan came to Rockford in 1842. He engaged in the lumber trade, in which he spent his active business life. He was also a contractor and builder, did a large business, and accumulated a competence. Mr. Regan was the architect of the old First Congregational church, on the corner of First and Walnut streets. He was a prominent citizen in early Rockford, and a Democrat in politics. His first wife was Miss Louisa Dewey, whom he married in Rockford in 1845. They had six children. The first Mrs. Eber Carmichael and the late Mrs. O. A. Richardson were daughters. Mr. Regan's second marriage was with Miss Adelaide Stewart, a native of Vermont. Their son, Hon. Frank S. Regan, is an attorney, and a stockholder of the Rockford Abstract Company. In 1898, through a local disaffection in the Democratic party, Mr. Regan was elected a member of the legislature as a Prohibitionist. His only predecessor of the same political faith in this district was Hon. James Lamont, who is now a member of the editorial staff of the *Chicago Lever*. The elder Regan died in Rockford in 1875.

James B. Howell settled in Rockford November 8, 1843. His business was that of a wool-carder and cloth-dresser. When the first dam was completed, Mr. Howell operated a carding and fulling machine on the south side of State street. He erected a building in 1846, and began business in 1848, and continued therein until the dam went out in 1851. He then removed his machinery to New Milford. He returned to Rockford; and some years later he formed a partnership with his brother-in-law, M. H. Regan, in the lumber business. After Huntington & Barnes' book store was destroyed by fire, Mr. Howell engaged in the book trade. His stand was the east store in Metropolitan Hall block, which for many years was occupied by B. R. Waldo, in the same line of trade. L. A. Trowbridge began business as a clerk in this store in 1861. Mr. Howell has been treasurer of the

township school fund since 1888. He was preceded by his daughter, Miss Ella, who held the office from 1882 until her marriage in 1887. Mr. Howell was a constituent member of the State Street Baptist church. For many years he has lived a retired life, and in his old age he is highly esteemed by a wide circle of friends. Comparatively few men can faithfully discharge every duty of life without occasionally making an enemy thereby. Mr. Howell has enjoyed the rare good fortune of being an exception to this rule.

Benjamin A. Rose was born in Philadelphia, in 1817. In early manhood he removed to Chemung county, New York, and in October, 1844, he came to Rockford. His first home was next to D. D. Alling's house, on South Main street. In 1848 he bought a lot on North church street, and built a brick house. In 1855 Mr. Rose purchased the Jackson farm on Montague street, just outside the city limits, where he resided until his death in 1883. Mr. Rose was county clerk from 1847 to 1849. He was one of the clerical force in the banking house of Robertson & Holland, and remained in the bank one year after removing to the farm. Mr. and Mrs. Rose were charter members of the Second Congregational church. Mrs. Rose died in December, 1896.

Dr. Lucius Clark became a resident of Rockford in 1845. Dr. Clark was born in Amherst, Massachusetts, June 10, 1813. He was the third in a family of seven sons, five of whom became physicians. The Doctor received his education in his native city. He pursued his medical studies at Berkshire Medical College, Massachusetts, and at Geneva Medical College, in New York, and received the first diploma given by the latter institution. Mr. Clark practiced at Marion, Palmyra, and Chili, in New York, for ten years, previous to his settlement in Rockford. Dr. Clark was a member of the American Medical Association, and of the Illinois State Medical Society. During the war he was in the field a short time as president of the board of examining surgeons for the state of Illinois. He was for many years a trustee of Rockford seminary. In 1836 Dr. Clark married Julia A. Adams, of Hinsdale, Massachusetts. She died in 1861. In 1864 Dr. Clark married Charlotte M. Townsend, of this city. Dr. Clark possessed rare social qualities. His geniality dispelled all reserve, and broke down the artificial barriers of formality and exclusiveness. He had a fine presence, and he was careful to the point of fastidiousness in his dress. Dr. Clark was fond of a joke. On one occasion, after hearing a sermon



by an intimate acquaintance, the Doctor complimented his friend on his sermon; but remarked that he had a book at home which contained every word of it. The clergyman, who was naturally restive under this imputation, called upon the Doctor for an explanation, when the latter produced the dictionary. Dr. Clark's home life was ideal, and his religious nature was strong and independent. He ranked high in his profession, and discharged every duty of life as a citizen and friend with strict fidelity and reverent sympathy. His death occurred November 5, 1878. Dexter Clark, M. D., followed his brother Lucius to Rockford, where he resided until his death, except the time spent in California, where he went in 1850. Dr. Dexter Clark was for many years a prominent member of the Second Congregational church, and superintendent of its Sunday-school. Many of the older residents will remember his noble Christian qualities, his ardent enthusiasm and his generous sympathies. Another brother, Dr. E. N. Clark, settled at Beloit; and a fourth brother, Dr. Asabel Clark, resided at Detroit, Michigan. Dr. Lucius Clark had two sons who succeeded him in the practice of medicine: Dexter Selwyn, and Lucius Armor. Dr. D. Selwyn Clark died February 12, 1898. No citizen of Rockford had a higher sense of professional and personal honor, and his death was universally lamented. The death of Dr. L. A. Clark occurred July 23, 1899, in the house in which he was born fifty years before. He had a wide reputation as an expert surgeon. During his residence on the Pacific coast he was employed as a steamship surgeon for some years, and was a passenger on the first voyage of the *Colema*, which, after long service, foundered a few years ago. Dr. Clark was also surgeon for the Illinois Railroad Company, which position he held at the time of his death. His wife and one daughter survived him. For more than half a century the Clark family was represented in the medical profession of Rockford. In the death of Armor Clark there passed away the last of this historic family of practitioners.

C. A. Huntington came to Rockford in 1845. He had left his family in July at Racine, Wisconsin, until he could find a desirable place for settlement. November 5th of that year he began his first term of school in Rockford in a building owned by H. R. Maynard, which stood on the site of the Masonic Temple. In the following year L. B. Gregory retired from teaching, and Mr. Huntington succeeded him as teacher in the old court house building on North First street, where he remained until



the fall of 1848. Mr. Huntington then taught in the old Baptist church on North Main street. Among Mr. Huntington's first pupils in Rockford were Capt. E. E. Potter, Leander H. Potter, Carrol Spafford, B. Rush Catlin, E. P. Catlin, Samuel Montague, Hiram R. Enoch, Hiram H. Waldo, Sarah Preston, Adaline Potter, Selwyn Clark, and Clinton C. Helm. In the autumn of 1849 Mr. Huntington was elected school commissioner, and served eight years. In that same year he also opened the first book store in Rockford, on the site of the Third National Bank. He subsequently removed to the corner store in Laomi Peake's block, where the Manufacturers National Bank now stands. There he and Robert Barnes conducted a book store, and a book bindery on the second floor. November 27, 1857, this block was destroyed by fire. Huntington & Barnes carried a stock of eleven thousand dollars, on which there was an insurance of three thousand dollars. Mr. Huntington resided in Rockford until 1864, when he removed to California.

Hon. William Brown was born in Cumberland, in the North of England, June 1, 1819. His father's family removed to the United States in 1827, and the senior Brown purchased a farm in Oneida county, New York. William Brown began the study of law in Rome, New York, and was admitted to the bar. In 1846 he became a citizen of Rockford. During his first winter in the west he taught a district school. Judge Brown was honored with several public offices. He was chosen a justice of the peace in 1847. In 1852 he was elected state's attorney for the district comprising Stephenson, Winnebago and Jo Daviess counties, and served three years. At the expiration of that time he was elected mayor of Rockford. In 1857 Judge Brown formed a partnership with William Lathrop, which continued three years. He then became a partner with the late H. W. Taylor, with whom he was associated until 1870. In 1864 he was elected a member of the legislature as a Republican. Judge Brown was first elected judge to fill the vacancy caused by the promotion of Judge Sheldon to the supreme bench. He was subsequently elected for three full terms. His career on the bench covered twenty years. Judge Brown and Caroline H. Miller, a daughter of Hon. Horace Miller, were married September 19, 1850. Their elder son, Edward W. Brown, has been three times elected mayor of Rockford. At the conclusion of his present term he will have served six consecutive years, the longest mayoralty in our municipal history. Judge Brown's

other children are Frank R. Brown and Mrs. H. W. Buckbee. Judge Brown was an able lawyer, a conscientious judge, and a Christian gentleman. By prudent management he acquired a large estate. He was a liberal supporter of the Centennial Methodist church, and was generous in the use of his money in charity and public enterprises. The Brown Building is named in his honor, and a controlling interest is owned by his family. Judge Brown died January 15, 1891.

Hiram H. Waldo was born in Elba, Genesee county, New York, November 23, 1827. He came to Rockford in 1846, when he was nineteen years of age, and completed his early education in the district schools. He studied in summer, and taught in the winter, for several years, until 1851. Mr. Waldo taught in the Redington district, in the old First Baptist church, Cherry Valley, Guilford, Harlem, in the basement of the First Methodist church as assistant to Seely Perry, and as assistant to C. A. Huntington, on Firststreet. While at Cherry Valley he walked to Rockford, a distance of eight miles, to attend a lecture by John B. Gough. Mr. Waldo subsequently spent two years in Chicago, where he secured a clerkship in the postoffice, under Postmaster Dole, and was promoted to the superintendency of western distribution. Mr. Waldo remained a short time under Postmaster Isaac Cook. He returned to Rockford when Charles I. Horsman became postmaster the second time. Mr. Horsman did not give his personal attention to the office, and Mr. Waldo assumed this responsibility. He paid Mr. Horsman five hundred dollars a year from the earnings of the office, and retained the balance as his compensation. Mr. Horsman, however, gave him a guarantee that he would receive an equivalent to his salary in Chicago. Mr. Waldo opened a book store in 1855, in a frame building which rested on poles, where the Grand Union tea store now stands. He remained there four years, and then removed into his present stand, in 1859, where for forty-one years he has done business without interruption. He is the only merchant now in business of all those engaged in trade when he began. Mr. Waldo, however, was not the only early book dealer on the West side. John M. Perry, a brother of Seely Perry, had a book store on the site now occupied by L. Moulthrop's dry goods store. Mr. Perry sold this stock to J. W. Seccomb. Mr. Waldo served as school commissioner of Winnebago county from 1857 to 1859, and again from 1863 to 1865. He took an honest pride in the teachers' institutes, which were



attended by all classes of people, instead of teachers only, as at present. Mr. Waldo believes that his efforts in that direction have never been surpassed. In politics Mr. Waldo claims the unique distinction of always having voted with the minority. He was an Abolitionist when there were only seven in the county. His affiliations in later years have been generally with the Democratic party. Upon the failure of the Second National Bank, Mr. Waldo was appointed receiver by Commissioner Eckles, and has paid eighty-five per cent. of the indebtedness. Since the organization of the Church of the Christian Union in 1870, Mr. Waldo has been an enthusiastic supporter of Dr. Kerr. It is said that in the nearly thirty years of its existence as an independent church, Mr. Waldo has never missed a service. Perhaps no man in town is as well known as H. H. Waldo. He has a ready wit, and the range of his information is broad. He is a shrewd observer of men and affairs; and has an inexhaustible fund of reminiscence at his instant command. His knowledge of the social life of Rockford covers more than half a century, and, with one or two exceptions, surpasses that of any other citizen.

L. F. Warner is a native of Connecticut. He read law with Hon. Reuben Booth, who had been governor of the state. A statute of the commonwealth then required a student to read law three years before admission to the bar. Mr. Warner came to Rockford in November, 1848. Chicago at that time gave no promise of so far outstripping Rockford. The Galena & Chicago Union had built a construction track a few miles from Chicago. In 1848 East Rockford was larger than the West side, and had more wealth. Mr. Warner has always been a Democrat. He was a delegate to the famous convention at Charleston, in 1860, which resulted in a breach in the party, and the nomination of Stephen A. Douglas for the presidency at a later convention. Mr. Warner has served Rockford as city attorney. He is now the senior member of the Rockford bar. In 1898 he completed a full half century of continuous practice in his profession.

Melancthon Starr is an honored name in Rockford history. Mr. Starr was born in Albany, New York, April 14, 1816. In 1840 he went to Tallahassee, as a commission merchant, where he represented several New York houses. His principal business was the purchase of cotton and its shipment in large quantities to the north. Mr. Starr, however, was a lover of freedom, and he became so disgusted with the scenes incident to slavery that he removed north. He became cashier of the banking house of



Nevins, Townsend & Co., on Wall street, New York. His residence was at Jersey City. Mr. Starr removed to Rockford in 1850. He first conducted a dry goods business on the Second National Bank corner. He was assignee of Charles I. Horsman's bank when it failed. In 1855 Mr. Starr became interested in what was afterward called the Winnebago National Bank. This banking house was founded in 1848 by Thomas D. Robertson and John A. Holland. Later John S. Coleman became a partner, and the firm was Robertson, Coleman & Co. On the death of Mr. Holland, Mr. Starr was admitted to the firm; and after Mr. Coleman's death the firm was Robertson & Starr, which continued until the organization of the Winnebago National Bank, in 1865. By reason of the respective characteristics of these gentlemen, the house of Robertson & Starr was sometimes called the firm of the Law and the Gospel. Mr. Robertson was president, and Mr. Starr was vice-president until his death. In 1857 Mr. Starr sold his homestead on North Main street to Elias Cosper. It was his intention to return east; but the death of Mrs. Starr changed his plans, and he re-purchased his former home, where he spent his last years. Mr. Starr was the beloved patriarch of a large family circle. December 16, 1839, he was married to Lucretia M. Nevins, at Norwich, Connecticut. She possessed literary attainments and great force of character. Their six children are: Harry N., Mrs. John P. Manny, Mrs. C. W. Brown, Chandler, David N., and Miss Lucretia. The mother died in 1857. In 1861 Mr. Starr married Ellen M. Townsend, who still resides in Rockford. Mr. Starr was a man of the world in the best sense, and left quite a large estate. He was one of nature's noblemen. It has been said he never left a promise unfulfilled. He treated all men with respect. The poorest man was made to feel in the presence of Melancthon Starr that he was a gentleman, and he always received the same courteous treatment as though he were the possessor of unlimited wealth, and moved in the highest social circles. Mr. Starr was a rare type of that rapidly-departing class, the old-school, Christian gentleman. There was not a grain of cynicism in his nature. The geniality of his disposition was as constant as the stability of his character. A beautiful trait was his sympathy for his old friend, the late Ephraim Wyman, who in his old age was reduced to very moderate circumstances. Nearly every Sunday Mr. Starr visited his friend, and cheered his last years with his sympathy and

purse. Mr. Starr was a Unitarian. He was a communicant of that church until its membership disbanded, when he became a regular attendant at the Church of the Christian Union. Mr. Starr died, universally esteemed, November 29, 1885.

John Edwards was born at Acton, Massachusetts, August 18, 1800. He was in business in Lowell before his removal to the west. Mr. Edwards was living at Alton, Illinois, during the excitement which resulted in the death of Rev. Elijah P. Lovejoy, America's martyr to free soil and free speech. On that occasion Mr. Edwards took an honorable and decided position in favor of the freedom of the press; and stood on guard at Mr. Lovejoy's bed, with a loaded musket in his hand, the night before that brave Abolitionist was murdered by the pro-slavery mob. Mr. Edwards came to Rockford in 1850. He was the first dealer in pine lumber in the city. His first yard was near Peter Sames' wagon factory, near the Northwestern railroad track. Most of his lumber at this yard came by team from St. Charles, and the amount of stock on hand at one time was from ten to twelve thousand feet. His second yard was on the northwest corner of Church and State streets, and the lumber was hauled from Elgin. At times he had difficulty in getting the lumber from the terminus of the railroad at Elgin. The teamsters who hauled wheat to that place would throw off a portion of the load when stalled in the mud at Pigeon Woods, and leave it there. Mr. Edwards encouraged the development of the Rockford water-power; was interested in the work of the seminary, and during his last years he was its agent. Mr. Edwards was an upright, worthy gentleman, of New England stock. His home was the present residence of George R. Forbes. His death occurred June 14, 1871. Mrs. Edwards was a woman of fine presence and force of character. She spent her last years with her daughter in Chicago, and died at about ninety years of age. Their three children are: Mrs. A. L. Chetlain, of Chicago, formerly Mrs. Melancthon Smith; Mrs. Julia Clemens, of Rockford; and the Rev. John Edwards, a retired Presbyterian clergyman. His wife was a sister of the late Melancthon Starr.



## CHAPTER LIV.

DEPARTURE OF MR. HAIGHT.—LOCAL STATISTICS.—OTHER NOTES.

DANIEL S. HAIGHT, the founder of East Rockford, like his West side rival, did not remain in Rockford to see the fruition of his early settlement. Mr. Haight removed from the village in the winter of 1847-48, and settled in Texas, near Shreveport, Louisiana. He revisited Rockford in 1857. The date of his death is unknown to his old friends in Rockford. There is a tradition, which is commonly accepted, that he was a soldier in the Confederate army, and that he died after the civil war at Fort Worth, Texas. No worthy record of his life and work has been preserved; but next to Mr. Kent, his name is most prominent in early history.

In the autumn of 1845 an eccentric character, who gloried in the name of Julius P. Bolivar McCabe, made his appearance in Rockford. He prepared a historical sketch of the village, which was published in the *Forum* of December 3, 1845, which gave a statistical resume of Rockford, which the writer called "one of the most tastefully built towns in Illinois." There were six congregations: Baptists, Congregationalists, Episcopalians, Methodists, Universalists and Unitarians; a branch of the American Bible Society; one classical and three select schools, with one hundred and fifty-eight pupils; eleven dry goods stores, with a winter stock which aggregated sixty-five thousand dollars; a printing office; three hotels; fourteen lawyers; six physicians; three justices of the peace; two drug stores; two jewelry stores; two harness shops; one iron foundry; two sawmills; one fanning-mill factory; one furnace and machine shop; a distinguished portrait and landscape painter; two land agencies; two wagon shops; three groceries; one edge-tool maker; two dentists; two meat markets; four tailor shops; one bakery; five shoe shops; two cabinet shops; one copper and tinsmith shop; five blacksmith shops; two cooper shops; two paint shops; one livery stable, and one fashionable barber shop. The population of the East side was six hundred and eighty; West side, five hundred and ninety-eight; total in village, twelve hundred and seventy-eight. Of this population, four hundred and seventy



were natives of New York; two hundred and thirty-seven of the six New England states; one hundred and sixty-two of Illinois, including one hundred and nineteen who were born in Rockford. Luther Miller, father of Anson S. and Cyrus F. Miller, then in his seventy-fifth year, was the oldest man in the village. Mrs. Elizabeth McKinney, aged seventy-six years, was the oldest woman. There were only two colored persons in the town. On the East side there were one hundred and fifty-one houses; on the West side, one hundred and twenty-six; total, two hundred and seventy-seven. In describing the court house, this statistician said: "It is crowned with a beautiful and well-proportioned cupola, which rises fifteen feet above the roof of the building."

February 23, 1844, Charles Latimer, a former lawyer and well known citizen of Rockford, was shot at Potoski, Wisconsin. A few days previous to the fatal affray, Latimer became involved in a quarrel with a Mr. Gloster and another gentleman, which arose from a discussion of the right of foreigners to vote. It was proposed to settle the difficulty by a duel; but by the interposition of friends, it was thought that the matter had been amicably adjusted. On Friday morning, however, as Gloster was passing along the street, Latimer accosted him, drew a pistol and fired. The wadding lodged on Gloster's breast, but the ball passed over his shoulder. So heavy was the charge that the stock of the pistol was shattered by the discharge. Gloster immediately retreated, but was followed by Latimer, who had armed himself with two loaded pistols and a bowie-knife. As Latimer advanced to Gloster, he said: "Are you ready? One or the other of us must die today" Gloster replied that he was not, and went to procure a double-barreled shotgun loaded with shot. On Latimer's approach Gloster warned him to keep back; but Latimer still advanced, and raised his pistol, which missed fire. At this juncture Gloster fired, and most of the charge took effect in Latimer's breast. As he fell, he tried to fire again, but failed. He expired almost instantly. Gloster immediately delivered himself to the authorities, and after a preliminary hearing he was discharged. Mr. Latimer, who had been rather intemperate in his habits, was said to have been perfectly sober at the time of the affray.

At the April term of the circuit court, in 1844, a case was tried which involved the liability of stage proprietors. Samuel

B. Hall recovered against Messrs. Frink, Walker & Co. a verdict for one hundred and seventy-five dollars, for a trunk which was stolen from a stage belonging to the defendants, in which the plaintiff had taken passage. It appeared conclusively that the plaintiff was a passenger in defendant's stage while enroute from Rockford to Chicago, and put his trunk on board, and that the same was stolen before it arrived at Newburg, without any fault or negligence of the defendants. The jury, however, were satisfied that they were liable as common carriers, without any default.

February 17, 1846, a convention of physicians of northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin was held in Rockford, when the organization of the Rock River Medical Association was perfected. Its object was mutual protection and improvement in professional knowledge. Dr. Goodhue was elected president; G. Hulett and George Haskell, vice-presidents; S. G. Armor, secretary and treasurer; censors, Lucius Clark, A. M. Catlin, A. Thomas. The first annual meeting of the society was held in Rockford the 19th of May following.

The gold excitement drew many to California in 1849-50. Among those who went from Rockford were Giles C. Hard, A. C. Spafford, D. K. Lyon, H. B. Potter, Dexter Clark, William Hamilton, H. H. Silsby, Isaac Rowley, Obadiah E. Lamb, a Mr. Smith, a Mr. Lewis, Sylvester Robinson, and Henry L. Simpson. Mr. Robinson died at Mud Springs, forty-five miles east of Sacramento, a few days after his arrival. Mr. Robinson was a native of Connecticut, and came to Rockford in 1847. He was father of Mrs. E. P. Catlin and H. H. and N. S. Robinson. Mr. Simpson died while on his return home, at Peru, Illinois, in March, 1851. His remains were brought to Rockford for burial. Mr. Simpson was father of E. L. Simpson and Mrs. Z. B. Sturtevant. He came to Rockford about 1839. He built a brick house which still stands on Leonard Schmauss' lot on North Second street; and part of another brick house on the southwest corner of First and Market streets. Mr. Simpson was engaged in the business of blacksmith. He owned a one-half interest in a grist mill at Cherry Valley, and property in Rockford. Mr. Lamb died in California. As in all similar ventures, some were successful; while others received no adequate returns for their journey into the far country.

## CHAPTER LV.

### EMMANUEL CHURCH. (EPISCOPAL.)

THERE are no early official records of this church; and the writer is indebted to Levi Moulthrop, one of the oldest resident churchmen, for the facts given in this chapter. The Rt. Rev. Philander Chase, D. D., first bishop of the diocese of Illinois, made his first episcopal visitation to Rockford, August 28, 1841. Prior to this time there had been no public services of the Episcopal church held in the county. There had been only a very few families of the faith who had settled in Rockford. Levi Moulthrop, M. D., was the first churchman who came into this county. Dr. Moulthrop arrived in the autumn of 1835. He brought the first American Prayer Book, which is now in the possession of his son, Levi Moulthrop, the dry goods merchant.

The first church family who settled in the county was that of Sampson George, who came from Yorkshire, England. They arrived in the settlement of Rockford September 24, 1836. The family consisted of Mr. George, his wife, Ann, and five children, two daughters and three sons. The children had received baptism in England. Mr. George brought a letter from their parish priest, commending the family to the spiritual care of any clergyman of the American church into whose jurisdiction they might come. They also brought two English Prayer Books. The death of Mr. George occurred five weeks after the arrival of the family in Rockford. There was no priest nearer than the missionary at Galena, and he could not be definitely located, owing to the extent of territory under his charge. Thus the first churchman was buried without the offices of the church.

During the next few years several other families of the church settled in the county. Among these were Jonathan Weldon, Chauncy Ray, and John W. Taylor. The former two settled on farms about six miles southwest of the town, and the latter remained in the village, and engaged in the dry goods business.

At the Bishop's first visitation the services were held in the old court house building on North First street, which served a similar purpose for other households of the faith. The holy



eucharist was celebrated for the first time in the county, and holy baptism administered. The Bishop preached. John Wadleigh Taylor, infant son of John W. and Jane P. Taylor, was baptized.

August 4, 1842, the Bishop made a second visitation to Rockford. The services morning and afternoon were held in the same building as in the preceding year. The sacraments of the holy eucharist, baptism and confirmation were administered. One of the baptisms was that of Levi, infant son of Mrs. Margaret Moulthrop. Those who received confirmation were Miss M. E. Weldon, Mrs. Margaret Moulthrop, Salmon R. and Spencer S. Weldon. The Bishop preached two sermons. Aside from these yearly visitations by the Bishop, the few church families in and around Rockford were without the sacraments of the church, except an occasional service by some missionary priest from a distant point.

In 1845 the Rev. Alfred Lauderback, of New York state, was appointed by the domestic board of missions to the missionary field of northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin, with Belvidere and Rockford as chief points of location. This fact meant more regular and frequent services for Rockford. The new missionary's first service was held August 10, 1845. Father Lauderback ministered in this section two years, when he was sent to take charge of the parish which had been recently organized at Galena, Illinois. From this time for several years occasional services were held in the village by the Rev. Dudley Chase, a son of the Bishop, and the Revs. Humphrey and Millett, of Beloit, Wisconsin; Pulford, of Belvidere; Johnston, of Pekin, and Miller, of Bonus, Illinois, the father of Orrin Miller, an early Rockford attorney. Services were generally held in the new court house.

The present parish was organized May 1, 1849. A meeting of the parishioners, both men and women, was convened, at which the Rev. Dudley Chase presided; and the parochial organization was effected in accordance with the prescribed canonical form. The articles of association were signed by Chauncy Ray, Jonathan Weldon, Horace Starkey, Duncan J. Stewart, John Conrad, S. R. Weldon, and Spencer S. Weldon. Upon the organization of the parish, the parishioners proceeded to the election of a vestry. Those elected were: senior warden, Horace Starkey; junior warden, Chauncy Ray; vestrymen, John Conrad, Duncan J. Stewart, S. R. Weldon.

The Rev. Dudley Chase was called to be the first rector. He accepted the call, but afterward declined, as he preferred to accept a charge in Chicago, where he organized the parish of the Atonement on the West side, which was afterward merged into the cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul.

November 15, 1852, the Rev. Charles Reighley, of Chicago, was called to the rectorship of the parish. With the consent of the new bishop, Rt. Rev. Henry John Whitehouse, the call was accepted, and the first rector entered at once upon his work. Bishop Chase had died September 27, 1852, and had been succeeded by Bishop Whitehouse. A lot was purchased on the corner of North Church and North streets, for two hundred dollars, and a church building erected at a cost of nineteen hundred dollars. The new church was consecrated by Bishop Whitehouse, August 23, 1853, "by the name of Emmanuel Church, Rockford."

Succeeding the Rev. Charles Reighley have been the following rectors in the order named: Revs. Anson Clark, Michael Schofield, William T. Smithett, Thomas Smith, S. B. Duffield, J. E. Walton, S. D. Day, C. S. Percival, F. W. Adams, A. W. Snyder, D. C. Peabody, Wyllys Rede, and N. B. Clinch.

The Rev. D. C. Peabody became rector March 1, 1886. During his rectorship the present rectory was purchased, and the Fairfield Memorial Parish House erected, at a cost of forty thousand dollars. The latter was the gift of one parishioner, Mrs. Eleanor G. Fairfield, and was erected as a memorial to her late husband, W. W. Fairfield. An additional thirty feet of land adjoining the church lot on the west was purchased, at a cost of sixteen hundred dollars, and many other permanent improvements made in the parish.

Emmanuel church, like the Episcopal church in America, has calmly pursued the even tenor of its way. Centuries ago the forefathers, in iconoclastic zeal, discarded the beauty and sublimity of her ritual. With a sort of reversion to type instinct, non-conformist churches have from time to time since then incorporated portions of her ritual into their service. Like air and sunshine, it appeals to the great universal, and will ever maintain its place in public worship. Four of the greatest spiritual forces of the centuries, Frederick W. Robertson, Frances Ridley Havergal, Phillips Brooks and Archdeacon Farrar, have found in this venerable church a congenial atmosphere for the highest development of the religious nature.



## CHAPTER LVI.

ROCKFORD FEMALE SEMINARY.—ANNA P. SILL.—ARATUS KENT.

THE subject of higher education received attention at an early date in this section. As early as 1836 or '37 a joint stock company was formed at Belvidere, for the purpose of building and maintaining an institution to be known as Newton academy. March 4, 1838, an instrument of writing issued from Boone county, by Dr. Whitney, commissioner of sales for the county, conveying to John S. King, Hiram Waterman, A. D. Bishop, William Dresser and F. W. Crosby, trustees of Newton academy, and their successors in office, for the use of the academy, block twenty in the original town of Belvidere. This tract of ground cornered with the southeast corner of the public square, and is now occupied by the residence of H. C. De Dunn. The building was commenced, and so far completed as to be tenantable, and Prof. Seth S. Whitman taught a school therein. He was succeeded by another teacher whose name has been forgotten. In August, 1843, the academy, grounds and franchises passed from the association, and became the property of John Walworth, in trust, to be used by him for educational purposes, and none other. In the same month Mr. Walworth conveyed the property to Arthur Fuller, a brother of the famous Margaret Fuller, subject to all the conditions named in the conveyance to Walworth. Miss Fuller went to Belvidere in person, and bought the property, and had the deed executed to her brother. Mr. Fuller occupied the academy as a teacher about two years, when he conveyed the property to John K. Towner and Eben Conant, subject to the same conditions. Mr. Conant was father of Rev. A. H. Conant, who was pastor of the Unitarian church of Rockford. The son used the academy as a school room and house of worship. His doctrines did not meet the approval of the membership of the other churches, and neither his school nor his church met with special success; and in January, 1852, Messrs. Towner and Conant conveyed the property to the Rev. Charles Hill Roe, a Baptist clergyman. From that time, for many years, the academy was used as a private residence; then as a barn, and was finally destroyed by fire.



About 1839 a seminary was founded at Mt. Morris, in Ogle county. The attempt to establish a school at Kishwaukee was noted in a preceding chapter.

As early as 1843 there was some discussion of the need of a college for the upper Rock river valley. A general convention of the churches of the northwest was held at Cleveland, Ohio, in June, 1844, at which education received much attention. It was decided that a college and a female seminary should be founded in southern Wisconsin and northern Illinois, respectively. A resolution was adopted that the "exigencies of Wisconsin and northern Illinois require that those sections should unite in establishing a college and a female seminary of the highest order—one in Wisconsin, near to Illinois, and the other in Illinois, near to Wisconsin." The delegates, upon their return, called a convention at Beloit in August, 1844. Three subsequent conventions were held at Beloit, because it was believed from the first that the college should be located at that place. The resolution of the first convention, affirming the need of both college and seminary, was re-affirmed in these subsequent conventions, representing especially the Presbyterian and Congregational ministry and churches in all the region. The union of these two churches in this movement may be attributed to the fact that each was weak as it stood alone, and only in union was there strength. At the fourth convention, held at Beloit in October, 1845, Beloit was selected as the seat of the college, and a board of trustees was elected, to whom was committed the development of both institutions. The first meeting of the trustees was held the same month. Upon the original board were Rev. Aratus Kent and Hon. Wait Talcott. The charter for Beloit college was approved by the governor of the territory of Wisconsin, February 2, 1846. Middle college, the first building, was begun in the autumn of that year.

Then began the discussion of a site for the seminary. Rockton and Rockford were rivals. But Beloit had been selected for the college; and from the Puritanical point of view of those days, Rockton was considered not a desirable distance for a college for young ladies. Thus Rockford was given the preference. The *Rockford Forum* of October 29, 1845, published a call for a meeting at the Methodist church, on Monday evening, November 3d, to consider the location of the seminary. This call was signed by thirty-four citizens, led by T. D. Robertson.





**OLD SEMINARY BUILDING**

[Began for the First Congregational church, subsequently owned by the county as a court house. Miss Sill began her preparatory school here. It was also occupied as a place of worship by several churches. Last stood on Gilbert Woodruff's grounds. Torn down autumn of 1899]



**SCIENCE HALL, ROCKFORD COLLEGE**



At this meeting it was resolved to attempt to raise the sum prescribed by the Beloit trustees as necessary—about three thousand five hundred dollars. A committee was appointed to solicit subscriptions, consisting of Jason Marsh, George Haskell, Willard Wheeler, Asa Crosby, Anson S. Miller, P. B. Johnson, and Horace Foote. The *Forum* of November 5, 1845, contains a full report of this meeting, also a lengthy editorial. Citizens pledged the required amount. The *Forum* of December 3d mentions, in a sketch of the city, that the trustees of Beloit college have located the seminary at Rockford. A charter was granted February 25, 1847, to the following gentlemen as incorporators: Aratus Kent, D. Clary, S. Peet, F. Bascom, C. Waterbury, S. D. Stevens, A. L. Chapin, R. M. Pearson, G. W. Wilcox, A. Raymond, C. M. Goodsell, E. H. Potter, L. G. Fisher, Wait Talcott, Charles S. Hempstead and Samuel Hinman. These same gentlemen were the incorporators of Beloit college. The board of trustees was to consist of sixteen members, with power to increase the number to twenty-four. But disasters affecting the business interests of the village prevented the fulfillment of the pledges which had been made, and delayed the enterprise for a time; but it was never abandoned.

Meanwhile, June 11, 1849, Miss Anna P. Sill began a preparatory school, under the name of the Rockford Female Seminary. The recitations were held in the old courthouse building on North First street. Miss Sill came to Rockford from the east, with the expectation that her school would develop into the seminary which had been planned by the trustees of Beloit. This preparatory school was not the seminary proper, but rather its forerunner, and entirely under local management. Miss Sill was assisted by the Misses Hannah and Eliza Richards. The number of pupils the first term was seventy, most of whom were under ten years of age. The opening of this school apparently gave an impetus to the consummation of the former plans for a seminary. The trustees were Rev. L. H. Loss, Jason Marsh, Anson S. Miller, C. A. Huntington, S. M. Church, Rev. J. C. Parks, Bela Shaw, T. D. Robertson, E. H. Potter, Dr. George Haskell, Asa Crosby. The academic year was divided into four terms of eleven weeks each.

In 1850 the citizens again made pledges aggregating more than five thousand dollars for buildings, and the ladies pledged one thousand dollars for the beautiful grounds. This original subscription list is still in existence, though eaten away in places.

It was found among the papers of the late Charles H. Spafford. The word *original* is here used because the subscriptions of 1845-46 were apparently never redeemed. The list is probably the only one in existence. Thus by September, 18, 1850, the seminary proper was assured as a permanent institution of Rockford, for the higher education of young women.

During the first two years of Miss Sill's residence in Rockford she continued independently her preparatory school. But in 1851 the school was formally recognized by the board of trustees of Beloit college as the preparatory department of Rockford female seminary, under the charter which they had already obtained. Full preparatory and collegiate courses of study were defined, and, upon examination, fifteen were admitted into the first collegiate class in September of that year. The year 1851 is thus regarded as the date of the founding of the seminary, according to the original design. The recitations were conducted in the old court house building, already noted. The seminary had been granted full collegiate powers by its charter, but it was called a seminary, as was customary for such institutions at that time. The name was not changed to Rockford college until 1892. Seven of this first class of 1851 graduated in 1854. Only one, Mrs. William Lathrop, is now a resident of the city. The course then covered three years, and was later changed to four years.

The present seminary grounds were purchased from Buell G. Wheeler. The land originally extended to the river, but a portion was taken by the Chicago & Iowa railroad. The property was not condemned, as the trustees preferred to sell rather than enter into any controversy. The grounds never extended farther east or north. They were never enlarged, and were reduced only on the west. The deed to this property was also found among Mr. Spafford's papers, and apparently had never left his possession. The reason therefor may be explained. Mr. Spafford was county recorder at the time; he was also a trustee of the seminary, and the treasurer of the board. The document would thus naturally remain in his possession. This deed and the original subscription list, previously noted, were presented to the college at the last commencement season by Mr. Spafford's family, and are now among its permanent records. The city of Rockford owes a debt of gratitude to three of its early citizens for the very existence of this institution. At a critical moment in the formative period, Charles H. Spafford, Eleazer



H. Potter and Dr. Lucius Clark mortgaged their homes and raised several thousand dollars to insure the success of the seminary. This self-sacrifice by these gentleman, who had faith in the future of Rockford, and who appreciated the value of higher education, has never been properly recognized, for the apparent reason that their course has not been generally known.

After the purchase of the grounds Mr. Wheeler said they were sold for much less than their real value. Mrs. Wheeler was deeply interested in the success of the seminary; and thus the property was obtained at a low price. Mr. Spafford also preserved a transcript of an itemized estimate of the cost of the first building, made by John Beattie. This document called for an outlay of seven thousand nine hundred and twenty-seven dollars and thirty-five cents.

July 15, 1852, the corner-stone of the first building was laid by Rev. Aratus Kent, president of the board of trustees. He spoke from the words: "That our daughters may be as corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a palace."

After the acceptance by the board of trustees of the financial pledges of the citizens of Rockford in 1850, it was deemed best that each institution should manage its own affairs. A provisional local board appears to have been created at this time; and in 1852 the seminary passed into the control of a separate board of trustees. The principle of co-operation, however, continued to prevail, and certain gentlemen were on the official boards of the college and the seminary. In the lapse of years this number gradually diminished, until now Thomas D. Robertson is the only one connected with the boards of the two institutions. The first formal appointment to the permanent faculty of the seminary was made in July, 1852, when Miss Sill was elected principal. In July, 1854, the collegiate course was divided into four departments: mental and moral philosophy; mathematics and natural science; history and English literature; ancient languages. The department of mental and moral philosophy was assigned to the principal. Miss Mary White was chosen teacher in mathematics and natural science.

In 1854 work was begun on Linden hall, the western wing. It received its name from the residence of one of its New England friends. From this place and from New York the larger part of the fund was obtained for its construction. In the fifties Miss Sill raised a large sum of money among her eastern



friends, especially in Boston, for the seminary, apparently to raise a deficit. Up to September 8, 1854, Miss Sill had secured in subscriptions the sum of three thousand six hundred and fifty-nine dollars and sixty-seven cents. This fact appears from a financial statement made by Charles H. Spafford. According to the *Rockford Democrat* of August 1, 1854, Mr. Milwain was the architect of Linden hall, and the plans and specifications called for an addition forty-one by sixty-four feet, and four stories. Linden hall was first separate from Middle hall, and then connected by a frame passage-way.

In 1866 a second addition, Chapel hall, with its connecting corridors, was begun, and completed two years later. In 1871 Linden hall and Middle Hall were connected by a corridor.

Of the first collegiate class admitted in 1851, seven were graduated in 1854, eight in 1855, sixteen in 1856, ten in 1857, eleven in 1858, ten in 1859, eleven in 1860, and nine in 1861; a total of eighty-two in eight years. There were then three departments: collegiate, normal and academic. During that time there were eighty-five others who entered the seminary, but did not complete the course. Forty-one were in the junior class in 1861. The whole number who shared in the instruction of the collegiate course during the first ten years was two hundred and six. One hundred and eighty-three had received instruction in the normal course; and the whole number of pupils for a longer or shorter time connected with the institution, including the preparatory courses, from the beginning in 1849, to July, 1861, was fifteen hundred and thirty. During this time there was contributed to the seminary from all sources the sum of thirty-nine thousand two hundred and twenty-eight dollars.

The influence of this seminary and later college upon the intellectual, social and moral life of Rockford may be recognized and appreciated; but it can never be fully estimated. The city does not contain a more enduring monument to the wisdom of its founders.

Many godly men and women have labored for the success of this Christian college; and those of a later day have reaped the harvest. This chapter would be incomplete without a more specific reference to Miss Anna P. Sill and Rev. Aratus Kent.

Anna Peck Sill was born in Burlington, Otsego county, New York, August 9, 1816. She was the youngest of ten children,

and inherited the intellectual and moral qualities of a long line of Puritan ancestry. Her father, Abel Sill, was a farmer, who died in 1824, in his fiftieth year, when Anna was seven years of age. Her mother was the eldest daughter of Judge Jedediah Peck, who, it is said, was the first in New York to urge legislative action for the establishment of common schools, and the abolition of imprisonment for debt. In 1831 Miss Anna made a public profession of religion. In the autumn of 1836 she taught a district school in the neighborhood of Albion. About six weeks of this time, during the vacation season, she attended a school at Albion, and in November, 1837, she entered Miss Phipps' Union seminary, one of the first female institutions of the state, as a regular student. One year later she became a teacher, and probably continued her studies at the same time. Here she remained five years, until July, 1843. During her last year at Albion she wrestled with the problem of her life-work. She had a holy enthusiasm for humanity; but a thick veil, which faith and prayer alone could rend, obscured her path of duty. She was inclined toward the foreign missionary field, if she could be accounted worthy of such honor. To her pastor she writes: "I have hardly dared to ask my Heavenly Father so great a privilege, but have prayed that at least I might be permitted after death to go as a ministering spirit and whisper sweet words of peace to some poor heathen soul." When an opportunity came for her to go to India, however, she had become convinced that her mission was, in part, to prepare others for the field.

After some time Miss Sill's thoughts were turned from Albion toward the west as a field of missionary and educational labor. She corresponded with Rev. Hiram Foote, who was then at Racine, Wisconsin, with whom she had some acquaintance. The reply was not favorable, and Miss Sill opened a seminary for young ladies at Warsaw, October 2, 1843. This was the first seminary entirely under her control. She remained there until March, 1846. In the following August she was invited by the trustees of the Cary collegiate institute, in Oakfield, Genesee county, to take charge of the ladies' department. This invitation was accepted, and she taught there until the spring of 1849. At this time the location of a seminary at Rockford was again under consideration. Friends of the enterprise had heard of her success as a teacher. Among these was Rev. L. H. Loss, then pastor of the First Congregational church. He invited her



to come to Rockford and open a school for youngladies as preparatory to the prospective seminary. Miss Sill accepted the invitation, and arrived in Rockford May 24, 1849.

Miss Sill and the seminary are thenceforth so vitally related that the life-story of one is the history of the other. In the summer of 1884, after thirty-five years of successful leadership, Miss Sill resigned, and retired to the more quiet but not less honored position of principal *emerita*. She accepted the situation as for the best interest of the seminary, with Christian fortitude. She who had been the directing force for so many years, must thenceforth live outside the circle, a passive spectator of the young and progressive life. This was perhaps the severest trial of her life.

Miss Sill lived five years after her retirement from active life. She died at her room in the seminary, June 18, 1889. The funeral was held in the chapel on the 20th. The introductory services were conducted by the Rev. Walter M. Barrows, pastor of the Second Congregational church. The funeral discourse was preached by her former pastor, Rev. Henry M. Goodwin, D. D. Prayer was offered by the Rev. W. W. Leete.

Anna P. Sill lived a life of entire consecration. Self was laid on the altar of sacrifice, that it might be wholly consumed in the holy flame. When the path of duty became clear, she threw the enthusiasm of her strong and generous nature into the founding of a school for the Christian education of young women. Its honorable history shows that her faith was not delusion nor mere enthusiasm; but that there was a providential guidance of her way, and a divinely-ordered connection between the work and the instrument. At the alumnae reunion immediately after her death, Mrs. Marie T. Perry paid her this noble tribute: "With her wondrous endowment of head and heart, and an indomitable will, she set up her standard in the wilderness, and with a courage that knew no faltering, a vigilance that was ceaseless, patiently, hopefully prayerfully, wrought out the dream of her life—the school of her love. . . . Her power over her pupils was rare and marvelous. Day after day, by word, look and act, she forged the unseen chain that at last she riveted around them. The impatience of youth might seek to shake it off and break it; the pleasures of life and the dictum of the world might strive to undo its fastenings, but sooner or later, disloyal legions would wheel into line and do valiant service in the cause of truth and right." Emerson



observes that there is nothing so great as a great soul; and it may be said that upon the thousands who came under her benign influence, "light from her celestial garments streams."

Rev. Aratus Kent was born January 15, 1794. He was a son of John Kent, a merchant of Suffield, Connecticut, and a brother of Germanicus Kent, the first settler of Rockford. They belonged to the family from which came the famous Chancellor Kent, of New York. Mr. Kent was fitted for college at Westfield academy. At nineteen years of age he entered the sophomore class at Yale. He united with the church under President Dwight, August 15, 1815. Mr. Kent graduated from Yale in 1816, and then spent four years in theological studies in New York. He was licensed to preach by the presbytery of New York April 20, 1820. From November 21, 1822, until April 11, 1823, he was a student at Princeton theological seminary. He was ordained January 26, 1825, at Lockport, New York.

Mr. Kent subsequently applied to the American Home Missionary Board "for a place so hard that no one else would take it." He was sent to Galena, Illinois, then a mining city, where he immediately began his labors. His first years in the west were spent in home missionary work. October 23, 1831, he organized the First Presbyterian church at Galena. His three children died in infancy; one in 1837, another in 1838, and a third in 1840. Mrs. E. P. Thomas, of Rockford, is an adopted daughter. Mr. Kent was a leader in the founding of Beloit college and Rockford seminary, and out of a meagre salary he contributed to Christian education. Mr. Kent died November 8, 1869, at the age of seventy-five years. He was honored in life, and his memory is held in reverence.

Around Mr. Kent was a senate of men like unto him. Eight of the sixteen incorporators were clergymen. Rev. Stephen Peet, father of the churches in Wisconsin, died in 1855; yet that brief remnant of his life enabled him to add the founding of Chicago theological seminary, as the completion of what he had done in aiding the building of the churches, and of Beloit college and the seminary. Rev. Dexter Clary, another incorporator of the two institutions, died June 18, 1874. Charles M. Goodsell, of Geneva, Wisconsin, became one of the founders of Carlton college, at Northfield, Minnesota.

## CHAPTER LVII.

### STATE AND LOCAL SCHOOL FUNDS.—EARLY ROCKFORD SCHOOLS.

THE public school system of Rockford had its beginning in national and state legislation. The foundations of the system were laid more than a century ago, about four years before the United States entered upon national life under the constitution. May 20, 1785, an ordinance was passed by congress, then assembled in New York, for a system of rectangular surveys of the lands in the "western territory," and it was therein provided "that there shall be reserved the lot number sixteen of every township for the maintenance of public schools within the township." The territory thus designated was the Northwest Territory, from which Illinois was created.

The Ordinance of 1787, for the government of the Northwest Territory, provided that "religion, morality and knowledge . . . shall forever be encouraged." Thus early was recognized the value of popular education. The next step was in 1818, when Illinois sought admission into the union. In April of that year congress passed an act enabling the people of the territory of Illinois to organize a state. Certain propositions were therein made to the convention of the territory, which, if accepted, would be binding upon the state and the federal government. Three of these referred to education. First, that section number sixteen or its equivalent in every congressional township shall be granted to the state, for the use of schools in such township. Second, that three per cent. of the net proceeds from the sales of all the public lands in the state shall be given to the state for the encouragement of learning, of which one-sixth part shall be exclusively bestowed on a college or university. Third, that two entire townships in the state, to be designated by the president of the United States, shall be reserved for the use of a seminary.

These propositions were accepted by an ordinance adopted at Kaskaskia, August 26, 1818. December 3d following, congress approved the constitution. Thus Illinois came into the

union with these valuable grants of land for the maintenance of education.

By the term "early schools" is meant those schools which were maintained under various laws of the state prior to 1855. The first public school law was passed in 1825, seven years after Illinois became a state. Common schools were established free to white citizens between the ages of five and twenty-one. Districts containing not less than fifteen families could be formed by the county courts, upon petition of a majority of the voters thereof. Voters were authorized at the annual meeting to levy a tax in money or merchantable produce, at its cash value, not exceeding one-half of one per cent., subject to a maximum limitation of ten dollars to any one person. The state also appropriated two dollars out of every one hundred dollars received into the treasury, and disbursed the interest on the school fund proper among the several counties; and these sums were distributed by the counties among the respective districts.

This law was bitterly opposed, and in 1827 it was amended so as to be virtually nullified, by providing that no person should be taxed for the maintenance of schools, unless his consent was first obtained in writing. The state appropriation of two dollars out of every one hundred dollars received into the treasury, was also withdrawn.

The school laws were revised at nearly every session of the legislature. These were all radically defective in that the state did not impose a tax, but made it discretionary with the districts whether such tax should be levied. The law of 1845 made it optional with districts whether they would levy a tax. The maximum was fifteen cents on the one hundred dollars. Many important changes were made. By this act it was provided that on the first Monday in August, and biennially thereafter, there should be elected a school commissioner in each county. The law of 1849 limited the local tax to twenty-five cents per one hundred dollars. The statute of 1851 provided that a majority of legal voters could levy a tax not exceeding one dollar on every hundred dollars, for building and repairing schoolhouses.

The *school fund proper* of the state consists of three per cent. of the net proceeds of the sales of the public lands in the state, one-sixth part excepted. This is known as the *three per cent. fund*, or *school fund proper*. Under an act of February 6, 1835, this fund was loaned to the state at six per cent. interest.



The interest on this fund constitutes one of the sources from which the common school fund of the state is derived. The principal of this fund is now \$613,362.96.

The *college fund* consists of one-sixth of three per cent. of the proceeds of the sales of public lands in the state. This fund was also loaned the state in 1835. In the same year it was provided that the interest on this fund should be annually loaned to the school fund, for distribution with other funds, among the several counties in the state. February 18, 1857, the interest on this fund, less one-fourth of one per cent., was set apart to the maintenance of the state normal university. The principal of this fund is \$156,613.32.

The *seminary fund* is derived from the proceeds of the sale of "seminary lands," which consist of two townships given the state by the general government, for the founding and support of a state seminary. This fund was also loaned the state in 1835. In the same year it was provided that the interest on this fund should be annually loaned to the state school fund. In 1857 the interest on this fund, less one-fourth of one per cent., was devoted to the maintenance of the normal university. The principal of this fund is \$59,838.72.

The *surplus revenue fund* was created by congress in 1836, by an act which deposited with the states, in proportion to their representation in congress, the money that had accumulated in the national treasury, mainly from the sale of public lands. Prior to this act an unsuccessful effort had been made to distribute this money among the states as a gift from the nation. The objections to this plan were overcome by depositing the money with the states, subject to return upon call of congress. About twenty-eight million dollars were distributed among the states in this way, and none of it has ever been called for. Illinois received \$477,919.24. A portion of this amount was expended in internal improvements, and the balance, \$335,592.32, was by an act of the legislature of March 4, 1837, made a part of the common school fund of the state, and loaned to the state at six per cent.

The most munificent donation from congress was the sixteenth section of every congressional township. This amounted to nine hundred and ninety-eight thousand four hundred and forty-eight and eighty-nine-hundredths acres. It has been said that if these lands had been properly cared for, they would have given the people such an ample public school fund as would

have saved them from local taxation. The local sale of these lands and the handling of such funds were delegated to township trustees by the law of the state. The principal of this fund varies in different townships, from less than one hundred dollars to more than one hundred thousand dollars. Unfortunately, most of these lands were sold at an early day, when the people were poor and prices low. Some township trustees were wiser, and held them for higher prices. The *Chicago Tribune* building and McVicker's theatre are built on school lands, still owned by the township, and pay an enormous rental. The township fund of the state in 1898, including a conservative estimate of the value of unsold lands, aggregated \$15,479,457.42. The principal of the township school fund of Rockford is \$4,000.

A local school fund is derived from fines and forfeitures. In 1853 the fines collected and criminal forfeitures on bail were added to the school fund. The present law provides that all fines, penalties and forfeitures which may be imposed in any of the courts of record, and before any justice of the peace, except those incurred for violation of the ordinances of incorporated cities and towns, shall be paid to the county superintendent of schools, and the same shall be distributed annually by him, in the same manner as the common school funds of the state are distributed.

September 28, 1850, congress granted to the states of the union, all overflowed and swamp lands, thereby made unfit for cultivation, within their respective limits. These lands were subject to the disposal of the legislature, provided that so much of the proceeds of such sales as may be necessary shall be devoted to reclaiming the same by levees and drains. By an act of the legislature, June 22, 1852, these lands were granted to the counties in which they were respectively located, upon similar terms upon which the state had received them, for educational or other purposes, at their discretion. January 15, 1855, the state auditor of public accounts certified that one thousand eight hundred and one and nine-tenths acres was the total amount of such lands in Winnebago county. In March, 1855, the board of supervisors appointed Duncan Ferguson, Milton Kilburn and Edmund Oviatt a committee to examine these lands, and report. These swamp lands were located in townships twenty-eight, twenty-nine and forty-three. Many of them were near the village of Winnebago. These lands were first sold by C. A. Huntington, the school commissioner,



at high prices, and during prosperous times. Little cash was paid, and the purchasers gave mortgages for the balance. Values declined, and the purchasers could not redeem their property. Thereupon the supervisors ordered them resold, which was done by H. H. Waldo, who succeeded Mr. Huntington as school commissioner, for about what they were actually worth.

Through some obscurity in the statutes of 1852 and 1854 upon the subject, there was prolonged litigation as to whether the proceeds should constitute a county fund, or be distributed among the townships. The money finally passed into the control of the superintendent as a county fund. The principal of this fund in Winnebago county is \$5,980.06.

By way of recapitulation it may be said the principal state and local funds for the support of higher and common school education are now as follows: Direct state taxation, direct local taxation, school fund proper, college fund, seminary fund, surplus revenue fund, township fund, fines and forfeitures, and the swamp land fund.

The cause of popular education languished for eighteen years from the passage of the first law in 1825. In 1844 a common school convention was held in Peoria, which earnestly pleaded among other things, for a state superintendent of public instruction. The legislature, at the session of 1844-45, yielded in some measure to the force of this reasoning. By an act of 1845, the secretary of state was made *ex officio* state superintendent of public instruction. In reference to local taxation it was required that a two-thirds legal vote of any district should concur in ordering the tax. The large property-holders, especially those who had no children, often threw their influence against a local tax levy, and the school revenue was consequently small. Many of the features of the school law of 1845 were incorporated into the law of 1855.

The first school in Winnebago county was taught by Miss Eunice Brown, who afterward became Mrs. J. G. Lyon. This school was on the site of 110 South Second street, in the rear of what is known as the John Early residence, and taught in a log house. This was about July, 1837. In the spring of 1838 Miss Brown taught on the West side, in a building on what is now the court house square. Mrs. Lyon died at her home in Rockton December 7, 1889.



In 1837 Miss Frances Bradford taught school in a log cabin which belonged to William E. Dunbar. In 1869 the late Mrs. John H. Thurston prepared a list of early Rockford schools, which, with some amplification, is substantially reproduced. Israel Morrill and Miss Sarah E. Danforth taught in 1838 on the West side; Miss Wood, in 1839, on the West side; James M. Wight, in the winter of 1838-39, in the building on the corner of Madison and Market streets, on the site of the American House; Miss Hyde, in 1839, in the same place; Andrus Corbin, in 1839, in a house owned by himself on the West side; Mr. Jackson, in the winter of 1839-40, in the house on the corner of Madison and Market streets; Miss Hepsabeth Hutchinson and Miss Maria Baker, in 1840, on the East side; Mrs. Mary Jackson, in 1838-39, on the West side; Miss Wealthy Bradford, in 1841-42, on the West side; Lewis S. Sweezy, in 1841-42, in the brick schoolhouse on the southeast corner of the public square, East side; Miss Harriet Barnum, in 1841, in a private house, East side; Miss Minerva C. Fletcher, in 1842, in a log house that stood opposite the First Congregational church, East side; Elijah Holt, in 1841-42, in the brick schoolhouse, East side; John Paul, in 1841, in the first house south of the railroad, Main street, West side; Lewis B. Gregory, in the brick schoolhouse, East side, 1843-44; Miss Fronia Foote and George Waterman, in 1843-44; Miss Julia Barnum, in 1844, in private house, East side; Miss Adaline Warren, private house, East side; Miss Augusta Kemfield, in 1845, East side; C. A. Huntington, from 1845 to 1849, in the old court house on North First street, and on the West side; Miss Elizabeth Weldon was assistant to Mr. Huntington; H. H. Waldo, in 1848, in Baptist church, West side; D. W. Ticknor, from 1846 to 1849, in the brick schoolhouse, East side, assisted in turn by Miss Elizabeth Weldon, Anson Barnum, John W. Andrews, and D. Dubois; H. H. Waldo, in 1849-50, Miss Hannah Morrill, 1848, East side; Robert A. Sanford, 1848, West side.

In 1850 Mr. Bowles taught in the brick schoolhouse on the East side; Mrs. Squires, in 1850, on what is now 111 Madison street, East side, and afterward on West side; Mrs. King H. Milliken, in 1850, East side; Miss Mary Dow, Miss Delia Hyde, and George E. Kimball, 1850-53, in the basement of the present First Baptist church building, West side; Miss Sarah A. Stewart and Miss Mary Joslin, in 1850, in a building where the Masonic Temple now stands; Seely Perry, in the basement of

the First Methodist church, on Second street; B. Rush Catlin, in 1852, in basement of First Methodist church; Misses Charlotte and Harriet Leonard, in 1851-52; Miss Stowell and T. J. L. Remington, in 1851, in the brick schoolhouse, West side; Rev. C. Reighley, in 1852, on the East side; Miss Fanny Avery, in 1852, on the East side; Mr. Stevens, in 1853, in the brick school house, East side; Miss Lizzie Fern, in 1853, on the East side; Mrs. Carpenter, in 1853, West side; Rev. L. Porter, in 1852; Mr. Stowell, in 1853; Rev. Addison Brown and Miss Frances A. Brown, on the West side; Miss Julia Galloway, in 1854, in the lobby of the First Congregational church, East side; Darwin Dubois, in 1854, in First Methodist church; Mrs. Julia and Miss Chapman, in 1854, on West side; Miss Belle Burpee and Miss Ethalinda Thompson, in 1855, on the East side; Halsey G. Clark, in 1855, in old court house, East side, with Miss Lizzie Giffen as assistant; Miss Emma Brown, in 1857, on the East side; — Freeman, in basement First Baptist church, West side; Wesley Sovereign, in First Methodist church, East side; Mrs. Jones, on West side; Miss Elizabeth Fisher, West side; Miss Gunsolus, East side; Mr. Johnson and Mr. Gifford, West side.

Nearly all of these schools were private. The teachers were paid mainly by the parents. The teacher made out his own bills and collected them. There was then no regular state or local tax, and the only public school money was derived from the interest on the several state school funds, and the township fund obtained from the sale of the sixteenth section. Private teachers, who conformed to certain requirements of the law, received some compensation from the public money, in proportion to the number of pupils under their instruction.

The early public school records of Rockford township have been lost. It is therefore impossible to obtain exact information. There appears, however, to have been a school district, with a schoolhouse, on each side of the river. The East side public school was in the brick building on the southeast corner of the public square. This schoolhouse was erected at an early date, by private subscription. L. B. Gregory taught there soon after his arrival in Rockford. His examination for certificate was quite brief, and was held in E. H. Potter's store. The directors were E. H. Potter, William E. Dunbar, Willard Wheeler, and Dr. A. M. Catlin. Mr. Gregory was asked to spell *baker*. He replied that he could not; but the certificate was granted.



In the classical institute, in the basement of the First Baptist church, from 1855 to 1856, of which H. P. Kimball was principal, one class pursued the regular studies of the freshman year in college, and entered one year in advance. A score of students left this institution and entered eastern colleges. Two years' study was considered sufficient to advance scholars through a full preparatory course of mathematics and the usual books in Latin and Greek, giving them a sufficient and thorough preparation.

Seely Perry taught a preparatory school for young men about a year and a half, in the First Methodist church. At this school quite a number of students prepared for college. Among these were the late Dr. Selwyn Clark; Alexander Kerr, who is now *emeritus* professor of Greek in the University of Wisconsin; Rev. John Edwards, brother of Mrs. Clemens. On account of ill health, Mr. Perry turned over the school to a brother of Dr. E. P. Catlin.

Besides the houses used for schools on the East side already noted, were: one on Kishwaukee street, near bridge; one on lot in rear of engine house on South First street; one on South Madison street. Not less than eight buildings were used for school purposes on the East side. A sum of money was once raised to build a second public schoolhouse on the East side; but it was never erected. The money was finally paid into the municipal treasury, upon the order of the city council.

John A. Holland and others build a schoolhouse for private pupils, on South West street. It was occupied exclusively by the children of those who erected it. It was therefore not a large school, but somewhat exclusive. The contract was made with Seely Perry for furnishing building material.

Another schoolhouse is now on South Main street, used as a blacksmith shop, near Mrs. Brett's block. The Second Congregational church was organized in this building. There was also a small schoolhouse on the south side of Green street, between Church and Court. It was a white frame building. Abbie Parker, a sister of the late G. W. Parker, taught there at one time.

The development of the public school system is an excellent illustration of the growth of paternalism; first, on the part of the general government; and second, in the gradual advance of the state toward the present standard. In a strict sense, the free school system was founded in 1855, and will be considered in a later chapter.



## CHAPTER LVIII.

### ADOPTION OF TOWNSHIP ORGANIZATION.

THE constitution of 1848 provided for a county court, as the successor of the county commissioners' court, and authorized the legislature to enact a general law, providing for township organization, under which counties might organize, by a majority vote of the people. In the early days of Illinois as a state, southern ideas and institutions dominated the commonwealth. The commissioners' form of local government originated in this country with the Virginia planters. The system of township organization had its origin in New England. But the root of this form of local government may be traced to the districting of England into tithings by King Alfred, in the ninth century, to curb the widespread social disorders which disturbed his realm. The change under the second constitution of Illinois was due to the influence of New England settlers in the northern portion of the state. The Illinois township system, however, is not closely modeled after that of the New England states.

The legislature, by two acts approved February 12, 1849, supplemented these two constitutional provisions by the necessary legislation. The first created a county court, the judges of which should be elected on the Tuesday after the first Monday in November, 1849, and quadrennially thereafter, and assume their duties on the first Monday in December following. There were also to be elected at the same times and places, two associate justices of the peace, who, with the judge, constituted the county court, which succeeded the county commissioners' court.

This county court was short-lived, so far as Winnebago county was concerned. The second statute, also approved February 12, 1849, provided that at the next general election in November, 1849, the voters in any county might vote for or against township organization. Consequently, at the same general election in November, 1849, the voters of this county elected both a county court to succeed the county commission-

ers' court; and voted to adopt township organization. Section four of the new law provided that if the voters so elected, the township organization should be in force the first Tuesday in April, 1850. At that time the associate justices ceased to be members of the county court, under the provision of section six of article seven of the new constitution. The associate justices, however, were elected for several years as justices of the peace for the county at large.

It may seem, at first thought, that two such laws would not have been passed by the legislature, as the second might nullify the first. But it will be observed that the township organization system did not become operative unless the people so voted; hence there was a possibility that they would not conflict.

From 1849 to 1855 the clerk of the county court was also clerk of the board of supervisors, under section eight of article sixteen of the township organization law. By virtue of an act of February 9, 1855, the clerk of the county court of Winnebago county ceased to be ex officio clerk of the board of supervisors, after the first Monday of the following April. Under this law Duncan Ferguson was appointed; and a separate clerk of the board was thereafter biennially appointed, until the law was repealed.

## CHAPTER LIX.

### SECOND CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

THE Second Congregational church was organized in the autumn of 1849, with forty-seven members. Nearly all had taken letters from the First church under date of October 18th. The application for letters, in part, was as follows: "We, whose names are underwritten, . . . believing we shall be serving the cause of Christ by so doing, propose to form ourselves, in company with such others as shall desire to unite with us, into a Congregational church to be styled the Second Congregational church of Rockford." Tradition has given no cause for separation from the parent church, other than the one assigned in the foregoing declaration. The resolution of dismissal recognized the right of every person to be governed by the dictates of his own conscience; still it was the sense of the church that this action was "premature and uncalled for." A vacant church building and a growing population on the West side seemed to justify a separation; and time has fully vindicated its wisdom. During its entire history Rockford has been a stronghold of Congregationalism.

The first meeting preliminary to organization was held October 30, 1849, at the schoolhouse in West Rockford. This building is still standing on South Main street. Rev. Lansing Porter was called to the chair, and Worcester A. Dickerman was appointed clerk. A committee of three was chosen to present at a future meeting, articles of faith, covenant and rules of government for the proposed church. Benjamin A. Rose, Dexter G. Clark and Thomas D. Robertson constituted this committee. It was resolved that the public organization of the church should take place November 14th; and Samuel J. Russell, Worcester A. Dickerman and Robert Clow were chosen to make the necessary arrangements.

An adjourned meeting was held November 7th. A resolution was adopted, by which the following named persons, who were then present, organized the church: Robert Clow, Burton P. Franklin, Rachel Franklin, David D. Alling, Rebecca Alling, Alexander Patterson, Helen Patterson, Ellen Patterson, Jane



Gordon, Thomas D. Robertson, Goodyear A. Sanford, Elizabeth H. Sanford, Worcester A. Dickerman, Caroline M. Dickerman, Michael Burns, Deborah Burns, Samuel J. Russell, Lucy Russell, Dexter G. Clark, Benjamin A. Rose, Antoinette W. Rose, Eliza Hanford, Rebecca Spurr, Harriette W. Platt, Rial K. Town, Clarissa Town, Mary Bond, Emily G. Sanford, Susan G. Fuller, Elizabeth B. Field, Mary A. Frink, Lemira L. Meyers, Lucy C. Hyde, Sarah D. Hyde, Esther Ann Hyde, Henry C. Hyde, Gershom C. Hyde, Alonzo Gorham, Hannah L. Gorham, Mercy A. Gorham, Ann Levings, Mrs. Elizabeth C. Porter, Anor Woodruff, Mrs. Eliza Woodruff, James Porter, Ebenezer Hyde, Mrs. Barbara Porter.

Thomas D. Robertson, from the committee appointed at the former meeting, presented a report on articles of faith, covenant, and rules of government. This report was accepted and adopted. The articles of faith were thoroughly orthodox, according to the standard of the time. The orthodoxy of today is somewhat elastic; but half a century ago the term stood for a clearly defined and rigid system of Christian doctrine. This Congregational creed consisted of nine articles. The three articles relating respectively to the fall of man, the atonement and eschatology are reproduced in full:

ARTICLE IV.—We believe that our first parents were created holy; that they fell from that state of holiness by transgressing a divine command, and that in consequence of their apostacy, all men, unless redeemed by the Holy Ghost, are enemies of God and under the curse of the divine law.

ARTICLE V.—We believe that Jesus Christ, our Mediator, is truly God and truly man, and by his sufferings and death on the cross, he atoned for the sins of the world, so that the offer of salvation is sincerely made to all men, and all who repent and believe in him will be pardoned and saved.

ARTICLE IX.—We believe that Jesus Christ will appear at the end of time to raise the dead, and judge the world; that the righteous will be received into life eternal, and the wicked will go away into everlasting punishment.

This preliminary organization was completed by the election of officers. Rial K. Town and Alonzo Gorham were chosen deacons; Thomas D. Robertson, clerk and treasurer; Benjamin A. Rose and Samuel J. Russell, prudential committee; Goodyear A. Sanford, Worcester A. Dickerman and Dexter G. Clark, assessment committee.

The public organization of this church occurred Wednesday, November 14, 1849. Previous to these formal exercises Mrs. Sarah J. Clark, Mrs. E. W. Spaulding and Mrs. Jane C. Houghton, who had been included in the original letter of dismission from the First church, but were not present at the first meeting, were received; also Mrs. Mary Haskell and Miss Eliza Holmes.

The Congregational council was composed of the following gentlemen: Rev. Hutchins Taylor, moderator; Rev. Dexter Clary, Beloit; Rev. Lewis Benedict, Rockton; Rev. R. M. Pearson, Grand DeTour; Rev. Lansing Porter, Rockford; Horace Hobart, delegate from Beloit. Rev. R. M. Pearson was chosen scribe of the council; prayer was offered by Rev. H. Taylor; and Rev. L. Benedict preached the sermon. The covenant and articles of faith were read by the clerk, and publicly approved by the church. An address to the church and deacons was delivered by Rev. Dexter Clary. The council then formally declared the Second Congregational church of Rockford to be duly and orderly organized.

November 18th Asher Miller, who had been included in the original letter of dismission, was received, upon the same. The new church continued to receive accessions from time to time from the older society, as the West side increased in population.

Since the mother church had vacated its first house of worship on the corner of Church and Green streets for the new brick structure on the East side, the former had been unoccupied. The Second church now returned to the house which many of its members had abandoned less than four years previous. Messrs. Kent and Brinckerhoff had failed in business, and the old edifice was sold by their assignee to the Second church. It was placed on a rock foundation and refitted for worship.

The first pastor of the new church was Rev. Lansing Porter. This gentleman had served the First church as its pastor a little more than two years. The records of the Second church do not show that any formal call was extended to Rev. Porter. But he assumed this position as soon as the organization had been effected, November 7, 1849, and served four years.

Mr. Porter pursued two years of his college course at Hamilton, and two years at Wesleyan college, and was graduated from the latter in the class of 1839. He then took the full three years' course in Yale theological seminary, and a year of post-graduate work at Auburn theological seminary. Mr. Porter



went to Chicago in 1843, and from there he came to Rockford, when he was less than thirty years of age. Mr. Porter's first pastorate was that of the First Congregational church, Rockford. Mr. Porter is now living at Hamburg, New York.

In 1851 the church was found to be too small, and its capacity was increased by the addition of forty feet to its length. Thus improved, it continued to serve its purpose for seven years. During Rev. Porter's pastorate the church was blessed with temporal and spiritual prosperity. A high standard of Christian living was maintained, and the obstinate backslider was promptly "excommunicated." Two examples from the records of 1852 may be cited. In April the prudential committee reported on a certain case "that in the absence of all evidence of her repentance for her sin, notwithstanding repeated labors with her, and the extension of her suspension, the committee recommend that she be excommunicated. Therefore the church recommend that she be excommunicated from this church." A few months later this resolution was adopted: "Whereas, — — — was suspended from this church for immoral and unchristian conduct, for the term of six months from January, and whereas he has given no satisfactory evidence of repentance, therefore resolved that he be and hereby is excommunicated from this church." In this day the word "excommunicated" has a peculiarly solemn and ecclesiastical sound.

On one occasion there was quite a serious discussion over the problem whether the congregation should "face the music" during that part of the service. The pulpit was in front of the congregation, and the choir in the rear. There was a difference of opinion as to whether the congregation should face the minister during the singing, or turn around and look at the choir. It sometimes presented a ludicrous appearance when the occupants of one pew would rise and face the minister, and others in front might be turned in the opposite direction, facing the choir. Finally a vote was taken, and by a small majority it was decided to face the minister. Every one accepted the situation, and peace prevailed. Mr. and Mrs. Dickerman and G. A. Sanford sang in the choir.

December 31, 1853, Rev. Porter severed his pastoral relation. At a meeting held December 16th of the same year, it was voted to extend a call to Rev. Joseph Emerson. This call was accepted. May 21, 1854, a Congregational council convened in the church for the transaction of business incident to the



settlement of the pastor. The installation services occurred on the following day.

Rev. Emerson was a son of Rev. Daniel Emerson; a cousin of Ralph Emerson, of Rockford, and a second cousin of the famous Ralph Waldo Emerson. Joseph Emerson was born in Dartmouth, Massachusetts, in 1806, and died at Andover, Massachusetts, in 1885. Mr. Emerson was graduated from Yale college in 1830, and from Andover theological seminary in 1835. He received his ordination in 1836. His pastorate in Rockford was eminently successful. He built the house on North Church street, where Ralph Emerson now resides. Some of his friends thought he was building his home too far from the village—away up in Dr. Haskell's orchard.

The pastorate of Rev. Emerson was signalized by the erection of the second house of worship on South Church street. July 19, 1855, the society voted that it was expedient to take action toward building a new church. A committee, consisting of D. G. Clark, G. A. Sanford, T. D. Robertson, John Edwards and John S. Coleman, was appointed to carry out the same. In 1856 subscription papers were circulated. A building committee was composed of John Edwards, D. G. Clark, J. G. Manlove, G. A. Sanford, Ralph Emerson, and T. D. Robertson. A correspondence was opened with Renwick & Auchmuty, a firm of architects in New York, and from them was received, in the summer of 1856, plans and specifications for the structure. The committee invited proposals. The most favorable response was received from David and James Keyt, of Piqua, Ohio. The committee, before letting so large a contract, desired to obtain definite information concerning the character and standing of the bidders. John Edwards was sent to Piqua to make an inquiry. The result of his mission was so satisfactory that the contract was let to the Messrs. Keyt for the sum of twenty-three thousand four hundred and seventy-eight dollars and seventy-eight cents.

There was some difference of opinion on the choice of location. Certain members strongly urged the erection of the church north of State street; but it was decided, by a vote of eleven to two, that it should be built on the corner of South Church and Chestnut streets. The lot was purchased from L. H. Rood for three thousand dollars. Work was begun on the building May 17, 1857, and was completed in the autumn of 1858. The plans provided for a stone porch in front, and a lecture room in

the rear. Upon signing the contract, the rear extension was omitted, because the committee could not depend upon obtaining money to pay for the same; and still later the porch was also abandoned, which reduced the expense about fourteen hundred dollars. The building committee met great difficulty in prosecuting the work, and during its progress the financial panic of 1857 came upon the country. It was one of the most severe strains in the money market in the history of the country. October 13th of that year the New York banks suspended specie payment. The committee had fortunately negotiated a loan for six thousand dollars, with a gentleman in New Jersey, on the 1st of October. This loan was made, as were nearly all the loans, on the personal notes of the building committee. The loan of four thousand dollars was also secured by a mortgage given by G. A. Sanford, T. D. Robertson and W. A. Dickerman, on their individual property. This document was preserved for many years as a memorial of the courage of the builders. Under these circumstances, there were some who favored the suspension of the work; it was proposed to leave off the spire; but the committee continued the work to completion.

Farewell services were held in the old church on Sunday, November 28th. After this little sanctuary had outlived its usefulness in a growing city, it was donated to the people in Owen township, where it was again used as a house of worship.

The new church was dedicated Thursday, December 2, 1858. The dedicatory sermon was preached by the pastor, from Isaiah 66:1, 2: "Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word." This church continued to be the house of worship for nearly thirty-four years, until the spring of 1892. It has been said that P. P. Bliss, the famous gospel singer and composer, wrote his best known song, Hold the Fort, in this church. Among the distinguished persons who have entertained Rockford audiences from its pulpit are Rev. Lyman Abbott, D. D., and Mrs. Julia Ward Howe.

July 30, 1859, Rev. Emerson tendered his resignation; and on August 23d an ecclesiastical council convened at the church, and dissolved the pastoral relation. The church did not long



remain without an under-shepherd. At a regular meeting of the church December 7, 1859, a call was extended to Rev. Jeremiah E. Walton. This call was accepted, although there is no record of his installation. This pastorate continued until December, 1863.

Mr. Walton graduated from Williams college, in 1853, and from Hartford seminary, in 1856. He came to Rockford from Troy, New York, when a young man, full of hope and enthusiasm. Mr. Walton entertained religious views similar to those held by the late Horace Bushnell, and especially those concerning Christian nurture. After his removal from Rockford Rev. Walton took orders as a priest in the Episcopal church. He subsequently returned to Rockford, and became the rector of Emmanuel church. Mr. Walton resides at Marshall, Michigan.

The pipe organ was constructed in 1863, at a cost of about two thousand five hundred dollars. Rev. M. P. Kinney was called to the pastorate August 10, 1864; and an ecclesiastical council was convened Nov. 29th. Rev. Frank P. Woodbury, D. D., was called November 23, 1870. He was succeeded in 1888 by the late Rev. Walter Manning Barrows, D. D. His successors have been Rev. Wesley C. Haskell and Rev. Peter Snyder.

Of the constituent members, eight are still living: Thomas D. Robertson, Mrs. Caroline M. Dickerman, Mrs. Emily G. Sanford-Dodd, and Mrs. Rebecca Alling, of Rockford; Judge Henry C. Hyde, Mrs. Sarah D. Hyde-French, and Miss Esther A. Hyde, of Freeport, Illinois; and Mrs. Hannah L. Gorham-Weldon, of Santa Barbara, California. Mrs. Emily Sanford-Dodd was the wife of Albert Sanford, who died in 1854. In 1877 Mrs. Sanford married Jacob S. Dodd, and removed to New Jersey. After the death of Mr. Dodd in 1884, Mrs. Dodd returned to Rockford. Mrs. Rebecca Alling is the widow of the late David D. Alling. She was born in December, 1813, and came to Rockford in 1837 with her husband. The last death among the charter members was that of Mrs. Harriette Platt-Cotton, which occurred April 9, 1900, at her home in Rockford. John Platt died in 1880. Mrs. Platt married Robert Cotton, and was again left a widow.

The accessions to the church in 1850 were twenty-nine; 1851, thirty-five; 1852, fifteen; 1853, sixteen; 1854, twenty-four; 1855, fifteen; 1856, twenty-seven; 1857, twenty-nine.



## CHAPTER LX.

### INCORPORATION OF ROCKFORD AS A CITY.—MINOR NOTES.

THREE nearly cōtemporaneous events contributed to the progress of Rockford from the simple village to its more commanding position as a city. The advent of the railroad, the first in importance, has already been noted. The organization of the new water-power company is reserved for a later chapter. The third factor was the incorporation of Rockford as a city.

As early as 1851 the citizens realized that the local government was no longer adequate to meet the needs of the rapidly increasing population. In the autumn of that year steps were taken for the organization of a city government. In pursuance of a call signed by Jason Marsh, G. A. Sanford, Willard Wheeler, Isaiah Lyon, George Wyatt, Newton Crawford, C. I. Horsman, W. A. Dickerman, W. P. Dennis, Jesse Blinn and William Hulin, a meeting was held at the court house November 29th. It was deemed advisable at this conference to submit the question of city organization to a vote of the citizens. The trustees of the town thereupon ordered an election for this purpose to be held January 3, 1852. There was no excitement to call out the voters, as the prospective change was generally accepted as a matter of course. One hundred and nine votes were cast for organizing under the general law of 1849. The city government of Springfield, Illinois, was adopted as a basis of organization.

The first election under the new order was held April 19, 1852. The candidates for mayor were Willard Wheeler and E. H. Potter. The election resulted in the choice of Mr. Wheeler. The aldermen elected were: Sumner Damon, First ward; E. H. Potter, Second ward; H. N. Spalding, Third ward; C. N. Andrews, Fourth ward. The first meeting of the city council was held on Monday, April 26th, at the counting-room of Eleazer H. Potter. William Lathrop was appointed city clerk. An ordinance was passed creating the following city officers: clerk of the council, attorney, treasurer, marshal, assessor, collector, engineer and two street commissioners. These officers were to be appointed annually by the city council at its first

regular meeting after the annual municipal election. At the second session of the council, held May 1st, the following city officers were appointed: William Lathrop, attorney; Hiram R. Maynard, treasurer; Duncan Ferguson, assessor; K. H. Milliken, collector; Duncan Ferguson, city engineer; Thatcher Blake and William McKenney, street commissioners.

An act of the legislature of June 18, 1852, authorized the city of Rockford to borrow money, not exceeding ten thousand dollars, for the purpose of constructing a bridge. Bonds were to be issued, in the sum of one hundred dollars each, bearing interest not exceeding ten per cent., and were to be redeemed within twenty years from issue. This sum was evidently insufficient for the purpose; and an act of the legislature of February 3, 1853, authorized the city to borrow a maximum sum of fifteen thousand dollars. Bonds were to be issued in sums not exceeding one thousand dollars each, payable within twenty years, and to draw interest not exceeding ten per cent. The act of 1852 was repealed. There is a tradition that Jason Marsh was sent east to negotiate the sale of the bonds, for which he charged a commission of ten per cent. This fee was very reluctantly paid. Today Rockford can borrow money at a very low rate of interest, and command a liberal premium on her bonds. The second or covered bridge was built in 1854, with the funds derived from the sale of bonds the preceding year. This bridge stood until December, 1871, when it was torn down and succeeded by the first iron bridge.

There was some technical irregularity in the incorporation of the city; and an act of the legislature approved February 8, 1853, legalized the previous official acts of the mayor and council. Section two of this law provided: "That all official acts of the council and of the mayor, or either of them, of said city, done or performed since their election as such, and prior to the period this act shall take effect, and which would have been valid in case the original incorporation as a city had been legal, be and the same is hereby legalized."

A special charter was granted to the city by the legislature March 4, 1854. By this act the general law of 1849 was declared to be no longer in force, so far as Rockford was concerned, except for the purpose of supplementing proceedings had or commenced, so as not to impair the legal consequences of any past transaction. This charter was amended February 14, 1855, April 26, 1859, and February 22, 1861. "An act to reduce the



charter of the city of Rockford, and these several acts amendatory thereof into one act and to revise and amend the same," was approved February 15, 1865. Rockford was governed by this charter until the city was reorganized under the general law. This general law, enacted in 1872, repealed the general law of 1849, and abolished the system of special charters. Between these dates there appear to have been two methods for the incorporation of cities in force at the same time: by a general law, and by a special charter. It may be presumed that a city generally obtained greater powers under a special charter than by a general law; and the former method of incorporation was more generally adopted by the cities of the state.

The constitution of 1870 abolished special legislation, which for half a century had been a cumbersome method of incorporating cities, colleges and business enterprises. Moreover, the old system afforded great opportunities for corruption in the legislature. The evolution of legislation in Illinois, from the special to the general, is an interesting study to the student of political history.

Previous to 1887 the mayor was elected annually. The chief executives of the city prior to 1864 were as follows: Willard Wheeler, April 26, 1852, to April 25, 1853; Hiram R. Maynard, April 25, 1853, to April 22, 1854; Ulysses M. Warner, April 22, 1854, to April 25, 1855; Edward Vaughn, April 25, 1855, to April 29, 1856; James L. Loop, April 29, 1856, to May 4, 1857; William Brown, May 4, 1857, to May 3, 1858; Seely Perry, May 3, 1858, to May 2, 1859; Charles Williams, May 2, 1859, to May 2, 1864. Mr. Williams served five consecutive terms. This honor has been conferred upon no other citizen. Mayor Brown will have served six years upon the expiration of his present term, but he has been elected only three terms.

The city clerks to 1866 were as follows: William Lathrop, May 1, 1852, to June 6, 1853; John K. Farwell, June 6, 1853, to December 6, 1853; Lyman F. Warner, December 6, 1853, to May 16, 1855; Samuel W. Stanley, May 16, 1855, to May 5, 1856; Hobart H. Hatch, May 5, 1856, to May 23, 1857; Edward Vaughn, May 23, 1857, to May 10, 1858; Louis W. Burnham, May 10, 1858, to May 12, 1859; Porter Sheldon, May 12, 1859, to May 7, 1860; Rufus C. Bailey, May 7, 1860, to April 2, 1866.

The following named gentlemen served the city as attorney



down to 1863: William Lathrop, May 1, 1852, to June 6, 1853; Lyman F. Warner, June 6, 1853, to May 1, 1856; Samuel W. Stanley, May 1, 1856, to May 26, 1856; Orrin Miller, Jr., May 26, 1856, to May 23, 1857; James M. Wight, May 23, 1857, to May 10, 1858; Harris D. Adams, May 10, 1858, to August 6, 1858; Porter Sheldon, August 9, 1858, to May 7, 1860; Christopher M. Brazee, May 6, 1860, to June 22, 1863.

In 1855 steps were taken for the organization of a fire department. Its need had daily become more apparent. A committee, appointed by the city council, purchased four small engines, named Constantine, Alexander, Sevastopol and Nicholas. The Sevastopol was received in the latter part of October, and February 21, 1856, a public trial was made of the engines, all of which had arrived. The result was not altogether satisfactory, and the "machines" with Russian names were discarded. In May and June, Winnebago Engine Company Number One, and Washington Number Two were organized, and nearly a year later the efficient engines bearing those names were received. Subsequently Union Engine Company Number Three was formed, and an engine procured. These three engines constituted the fire apparatus of the city as late as 1869. The first six chief engineers were Edward F. W. Ellis, Samuel I. Church, M. A. Bartlett, Howard D. Frost, A. G. Springsteen, Gardner S. Allen. The first four first assistant engineers were Gardner S. Allen, James E. L. Southgate, Charles T. Jellerson, Hiram H. Waldo.

The tax levies for the first few years under the new regime were as follows: 1854, seven and one-half mills on each dollar of taxable property, both real and personal; 1855, ten mills on each dollar; 1856, one and three-quarters per cent. on each dollar; 1857, one and one-half per cent.; 1858, one and five-eighths per cent.; 1859, two and one-half per cent.; 1860, two per cent.; 1861, two per cent. It will be observed that the rate increased each year up to 1859.

The City Hotel was opened in June, 1852, by James B. Pierce, who had been connected with the Winnebago House. The City Hotel stood on the southeast corner of State and Church streets. It was one of the old land landmarks on the street, and was torn down to make room for Hon. E. B. Sumner's brick block, occupied by the Forest City National Bank.

The Rockford *Forum* of July 7, 1852, appeared in mourn-

ing for the death of Henry Clay, which occurred June 29th. Bells were tolled upon receipt of the intelligence. A mass meeting of the citizens was held at the court house July 1st, to make arrangements for a public tribute to the memory of the great statesman. Anson S. Miller was chairman, and John A. Phelps, secretary of the meeting. Newton Crawford, William Brown, John A. Phelps, John Edwards, Selden M. Church, Anson S. Miller and Mayor Wheeler were appointed a committee to complete arrangements. Memorial services were held at the Baptist church July 24th. Prayer was offered by the pastor, and Ex-Governor Bebb pronounced an eloquent eulogy. It has been said man is, as he is related to other men. Henry Clay could be measured by this standard. He was the greatest parliamentary leader of his time, with Douglas and Blaine as close seconds.

The First Baptist church purchased a bell from the foundry of Rineker & Company, of Chicago, in July, 1852. Its weight was fifteen hundred and forty pounds, and cost about six hundred dollars.

Hon. John P. Hale, the candidate of the free Democracy for the presidency, delivered an address at the court house in Rockford, October 15, 1852. The audience was estimated at five thousand, and many came from neighboring counties. Mr. Hale's address was dignified and candid, and made a favorable impression.

In October, 1852, the Bank of Rockford was organized under the general banking law of the state. Charles I. Horsman was president, and Charles C. Wilcox, cashier. A sworn statement of its condition on the first Monday in July, 1853, reported a circulation of \$49,995. Levi Moulthrop began his business life as a clerk in this bank, when he was twelve years of age, and remained five years. The bank suspended in 1857.

October 27th the *Forum* a second time appeared in mourning, for the death of Daniel Webster, which occurred the preceding Sunday. Although Mr. Webster's death made a profound impression throughout the country, it did not so stir the hearts of Rockford citizens as did the passing of Henry Clay. Men loved Henry Clay; they admired Daniel Webster. One moved men; the other expounded principles. The work of Webster is the more enduring. He will rank in history with Hamilton and Marshall. On the Sunday following the death of Mr. Webster, Theodore Parker preached a memorial discourse in Boston, in

which he boldly criticised his subject. In view of the fact that this oration is regarded as one of Parker's masterpieces, a local cotemporary estimate is of interest. The *Forum*, edited by A. Colton, made this editorial comment: "That erratic divine, Theodore Parker, has improved the opportunity to preach a sermon upon the death of Mr. Webster, . . . His attempt to criticise the career of Mr. Webster is like a phosphoretic spark prescribing for a thunderbolt. It has been well observed that it is an illustration of the ass kicking the dead lion."

In March, 1853, Julius J. Trask, a settler of Winnebago county, died in California. His brother, Alva Trask, the first proprietor of Trask's ferry on Pecatonica river, died in California some months previous.

The term, "Forest City," as applied to Rockford, had its origin in an article written by a correspondent of the New York *Tribune*, which was published in the autumn of 1853. The preservation of the native forest trees made the name appropriate, and Rockford is so designated to this day.

In pursuance of an act of the legislature approved February 14, 1853, Thomas H. Campbell, state auditor of public accounts, offered for sale at public auction at the court house in Rockford, November 18, 1853, all state lands in Winnebago county. About twelve hundred acres were sold. The law fixed the minimum price at three dollars and fifty cents per acre. These lands were given the state by act of congress of September 4, 1841, for the purpose of creating an internal improvement fund.



## CHAPTER LXI.

### ELECTIONS OF 1852-53.—ELIHU B. WASHBURNE.

IN the presidential election of 1852 Winnebago county maintained its position as a Whig stronghold. The presidential electors received 1,023 votes; the Democratic electors, 820; Free Soil electors, 725.

Under the apportionment of August 22, 1852, the legislature divided the state into nine congressional districts. The First district comprised the counties of Lake, McHenry, Boone, Winnebago, Stephenson, Jo Daviess, Carroll and Ogle.

The campaign of 1852 was signalized by the election of E. B. Washburne as a member of congress from the First district. Mr. Washburne received 1,102 votes in Winnebago county; Thompson Campbell, his Democratic opponent, 851; and Newman Campbell, 610 votes. The advent of Mr. Washburne into national politics is worthy of more than a passing notice. Elihu Benjamin Washburne was a member of the celebrated Washburne family. He was born in Livermore, Maine, September 23, 1816. In 1839 he entered the Harvard law school. Among his classmates were Richard H. Dana and William M. Evarts. He was admitted to the bar in 1840, and at once settled at Galena, Illinois, and entered into partnership in the practice of law with Charles S. Hempstead, one of the incorporators of Rockford female seminary. Mr. Washburne remained in congress from 1853 until March 6, 1869. From this long and honorable service he was familiarly known as the "Father of the House," and in that capacity he administered the oath as speaker to Schuyler Colfax three times, and once to James G. Blaine. By reason of his insistence that the finances of the government should be administered with the strictest economy, Mr. Washburne was called the "Watch-dog of the Treasury." Mr. Washburne called the attention of Governor Yates to his townsman, Ulysses S. Grant, who wished to enter military service. When the hero of the civil war became president, he honored his old friend with the appointment of secretary of state, and later he made him minister to France. This position he held during the Franco-Prussian war. At the request of Bismarck,

and with the permission of the French minister of foreign affairs, Mr. Washburne exercised his official influence for the protection of the Germans in Paris. When the empire was overthrown, Mr. Washburne was the first foreign representative to recognize the new republic. He remained in Paris during the siege, and was at his post when the commune ruled the city. The emperor of Germany recognized his services by conferring upon him the Order of the Red Eagle. He declined this honor because a provision of the constitution of the United States prohibited it. Upon Mr. Washburne's resignation in 1877, the emperor sent him his life-size portrait; and he was similarly honored by Bismarck, Theiers and Gambetta. Mr. Washburne died in Chicago October 22, 1887. His rugged independence and absolute integrity gave him the full confidence of the people.

Abraham I. Enoch was elected a member of the legislature from the Forty-seventh senatorial district. His vote in Winnebago county was 1,063; Lyman F. Warner, Democrat, 840; Ezra S. Cable, 659. Mr. Enoch was born in Dayton, Ohio, July 24, 1819. He came to this county with his father's family in 1835, and settled in Guilford township. Mr. Enoch was honored by several public offices, and in 1866 he was again elected a member of the legislature. Mr. Enoch removed to Rockford in 1867, and began the manufacture of plows. In 1844 Mr. Enoch married Catharine J. Davis. They had seven daughters: Mrs. D. C. Putnam, Mrs. H. H. Carpenter, Mrs. Charles A. Works, and Misses Clara, Harriett A., Emma A. and Lois A. Reverses of fortune came to Mr. Enoch, but he sustained them with the courage and honor of a high-minded Christian gentleman. Mr. Enoch died in 1883.

William Brown was elected state's attorney for the Fourteenth judicial circuit. His majorities in the several counties were: Winnebago, 650; Stephenson, 480; Jo Daviess, 87; total, 1,217. His opponents were Francis Burnap, John C. Kean and Francis S. W. Bradley.

Charles H. Spafford was elected circuit clerk by an even one thousand votes; King H. Milliken was elected sheriff; Alfred A. Chamberlain, coroner.

At the county election in 1853 the entire Whig ticket was successful. Selden M. Church was elected county judge; Asher Beach and Alfred E. Hale, associate justices; William Hulin, county clerk; C. A. Huntington, school commissioner; Duncan Ferguson, county treasurer; Duncan Ferguson, surveyor.

## CHAPTER LXII.

### THE WATER-POWER COMPANY.—THE MANNY-M'CORMICK SUIT.

JULY 15, 1851, many of the leading public-spirited citizens of the town associated themselves together under the name of the Rockford Water Power Company. These gentlemen were: Thomas D. Robertson, John A. Holland, R. P. Lane, G. A. Sanford, W. A. Dickerman, S. M. Church, Orlando Clark, C. I. Horsman, John Edwards, John S. Coleman, John Fisher, William Hulin, Isaiah Lyon, Melancthon Starr, C. H. Spafford, Lucius Clark, J. J. Town, Henry Potwin, H. R. Maynard, Jas. H. Rogers, B. McKenney, John Platt, Albert Sanford, Chas. C. Hope, H. P. Kimball, Robert Clow, — Vanduzer and — McCoy. This organization was effected in pursuance of the general law enacted by the legislature in 1849, for the improvement of Rock river and the production of hydraulic power.

In September, 1851, the owners of the water and land under the old company entered into an agreement with the new company, whereby the two interests were consolidated; and steps were immediately taken for the construction of a permanent dam on the rock bottom of the old ford, from which the city derives its name. In the spring of 1853 the dam and race were completed and accepted by the company. The length of the dam is between seven hundred and eight hundred feet. The water-power is divided into twenty thousand parts, and is held and sold in this proportion.

The first great impetus given to the manufacturing interests of Rockford was the advent of John H. Manny, in 1853. Mr. Manny was born in Amsterdam, New York, November 28, 1825. His father, Pells Manny, settled at Waddam's Grove, in Stephenson county. The younger Manny's attention was called to the need of a reaper by his father's purchase of a heading machine, which proved unsatisfactory. The father and son thereupon so reconstructed the header as to practically make a new machine. They obtained a patent on the header and began its manufacture on a small scale. It proved to be too expensive, and was abandoned. Mr. Manny then directed his atten-



tion toward perfecting a reaper, and after many vicissitudes, which brought him to serious financial embarrassment, his inventive genius and indomitable energy were crowned with success. Mr. Manny built eighty-four machines in 1852.

In July, 1852, a reaper trial was held in Geneva, New York, in which Mr. Manny's reaper came into competition with eleven others. The excellence of Mr. Manny's machine was established.

In the spring of 1853 Mr. Manny was urged to come to Rockford by Orlando Clark. The preceding year Isaac Utter came from the east, and formed a partnership with Mr. Clark, under the firm name of Clark & Utter. In the spring of 1853 there were manufactured one hundred and fifty of Mr. Manny's combined reapers and mowers, in Clark & Utter's factory. It is also said that John A. Holland told Blinn & Emerson, who were then in the hardware business, that it would be desirable to have Mr. Manny come to Rockford for two reasons: first, there was better water-power; second, the firm was extending liberal credit to Mr. Manny for stock.

The popularity of the Manny reaper demanded larger capital. In the spring of 1854 Wait and Sylvester Talcott became associated with Mr. Manny as partners, under the name of J. H. Manny & Company, and during the year eleven hundred machines were made. In the autumn of 1854 Jesse Blinn and Ralph Emerson were added to the firm, and its name was changed to Manny & Company. In 1855 the famous trials of the Manny reaper were made in Europe, which gave to his inventions a reputation abroad. Mr. Manny continued to improve his reaper, and obtained twenty-three patents upon new devices.

In September, 1855, C. H. McCormick, of Chicago, began suit in the federal court to enjoin the Manny Company from using a certain device, upon the ground of infringement of patent. The case was heard before Justice McLean and Judge Drummond, at Cincinnati, although the court records were kept in Chicago, which belonged to the same circuit. Attorneys of national reputation were retained. Mr. McCormick's counsel were Reverdy Johnson and E. N. Dickerson. Peter H. Watson, who had obtained Mr. Manny's patents, was given entire charge of the defendants' case. Mr. Watson had formerly resided in Rockford, and later he became assistant secretary of war. He employed George Harding, Edwin M. Stanton and Abraham Lincoln. It is said E. B. Washburne had recommended Mr.

Lincoln to Mr. Manny. When all the parties had arrived at Cincinnati, Mr. Lincoln was informed by Mr. Watson that Mr. Stanton would close the case for the defendants. This was a great humiliation to Mr. Lincoln. Although he had prepared his argument, Mr. Lincoln did not argue the case. Mr. Lincoln first met Mr. Stanton at Cincinnati. Mr. Stanton treated him with great discourtesy during the trial, and referred to him as a railsplitter from the wild west. Notwithstanding these indignities, Mr. Lincoln was impressed with Mr. Stanton's great force of character; and when six years later a man of iron was needed, President Lincoln made Mr. Stanton his secretary of war. No other incident in the life of Mr. Lincoln better illustrates his moral greatness. The trial resulted in a victory for the Manny Company. The decision was announced January 16, 1856. The defendants' expenses of the suit were sixty thousand dollars, and this large sum was made from the business in a short time. Mr. McCormick appealed the case to the United States supreme court, where the decision of the lower court was affirmed, and Mr. Manny's rights as inventor were fully sustained.

Ida M. Tarbell's *Life of Lincoln*, republished from her serial in *McClure's Magazine*, gives an incident of this trial, which the author obtained from Ralph Emerson, who says:

"Mr. Stanton closed his speech in a flight of impassioned eloquence. Then the court adjourned for the day, and Mr. Lincoln invited me to take a long walk with him. For block after block he walked rapidly forward, not saying a word, evidently deeply dejected.

"At last he turned suddenly to me, exclaiming: 'Emerson, I'm going home.' A pause. 'I am going home to study law.'

"'Why, I exclaimed; 'Mr. Lincoln, you stand at the head of the bar in Illinois now! What are you talking about?'

"'Ah, yes,' he said, 'I do occupy a good position there, and I think that I can get along with the way things are done there now. But these college-trained men, who have devoted their whole lives to study, are coming west, don't you see? And they study their cases as we never do. They have got as far as Cincinnati now. They will soon be in Illinois.' Another long pause; then stopping and turning toward me, his countenance suddenly assuming that look of strong determination which those who knew him best sometimes saw upon his face, he exclaimed, 'I am going home to study law! I am as good as



any of them, and when they get out to Illinois I will be ready for them.'"

Mr. Lincoln once visited Rockford on professional business in connection with this suit. It was on a hot summer afternoon. Mr. Lincoln and one of the clients sat on an old log on the bank of the river and discussed the matter. Mr. Lincoln wore a long linen coat, and presented that picture of ungainliness with which the world is familiar. Mr. Lincoln was a guest at Mr. Manny's home, which was a small frame building that stood on the site of the Milwaukee depot. The company paid Mr. Lincoln one thousand dollars, which was the largest fee he had received up to that time.

The prolonged mental strain incident to perfecting his inventions and the trial of the suit undermined Mr. Manny's health. He fell a prey to consumption, and January 31, 1856, he passed away, in his little modest home on South Main street, when he had just passed his thirtieth birthday. He never realized the wealth which his inventions would bring to others, nor the prestige which they would give to the Reaper City, nor the great name which he had made for himself.

Mrs. Manny received a royalty of twenty-five dollars on every machine manufactured. This amount was subsequently reduced. Financial reverses overtook the company in 1857, but it weathered the storm, and built an extensive plant.

During the next few years after the arrival of J. H. Manny, other manufacturers began business on the water-power. D. Forbes & Son established their iron foundry in 1854, and in 1864 the malleable iron works were added to the business.

Joseph Rodd came to Rockford from Canada in the autumn of 1853, and a few years later he embarked in the milling business on the east side of the river. Mr. Rodd's home was the residence of Colonel Lawler on Kishwaukee street.

In 1854 M. Bartlett & Company built one of the finest stone structures on the water-power for a flouring mill. The Troxell mill was established in 1853 on the East side, and in 1855 it was purchased by Mr. Bartlett.

T. Derwent & Son began the milling business on the water-power in 1859.

Messrs. Bertrand & Sames were engaged in the manufacture of cultivators in the middle fifties.

W. D. Trahern came to Rockford in 1848 and manufactured threshing machines on the old water-power, under the firm name



of Trahern & Stuart. In 1856 Mr. Stuart retired and was succeeded by Mr. Dales. Later Mr. Trahern manufactured iron pumps. He died November 2, 1883.

In 1854 John P. Manny began the manufacture of knife sections in Rockford for John H. Manny's reapers. He succeeded in producing a knife section that was hardened by his own peculiar process in oil tempering, which has never been surpassed to this day.

F. H. Manny came to Rockford in 1859 and a few years later he was engaged in manufacturing the John H. Manny combined reaper and mower.

N. C. Thompson came to Rockford in 1857, and for years he manufactured exclusively the John P. Manny reaper and mower.

William Gent came to Rockford in 1857, and was associated with John Nelson in scroll work, and later he assisted the inventor in perfecting his knitting machine. Mr. Gent was considered one of the best working mechanics in the state. He died June 20, 1887.

## CHAPTER LXIII.

EMERSON, LOWELL, WHIPPLE AND OTHERS LECTURE IN ROCKFORD.

THERE has been one movement in the history of the American mind which gave to literature a group of writers entitled to the name of a school. This was the great humanitarian movement, or series of movements, in New England, which began with the elder Channing, ran through its later phase in transcendentalism, and spent its force in the anti-slavery agitation and the enthusiasms of the civil war. This movement was cotemporary with the preaching of many novel doctrines in religion, sociology, science, education, medicine and hygiene. New sects were formed. There were Millerites, Spiritualists, Mormons, Swedenborgians and Shakers.

This intellectual and moral awakening found its expression in the lecture platform. The daily newspaper had not assumed its present blanket-sheet proportions; and the leaders of these various phases of new thought carried their message to the people in person.

In the autumn of 1853 the Young Men's Association was organized, for the purpose of bringing to Rockford the most popular lecturers of the day. Among its members were Rev. H. M. Goodwin, C. H. Spafford, H. H. Waldo, H. P. Holland, E. W. Blaisdell, J. E. L. Southgate, William Lathrop, R. A. Sanford, E. H. Baker, Rev. J. Murray, E. C. Daugherty, A. S. Miller.

The first course was provided for the winter of 1853-54. It began with two lectures, November 29th and 30th, by E. P. Whipple, in the First Baptist church. It is almost incredible that one of the local newspapers should not have even given the subject of his lecture. From the other, however, it is learned that Mr. Whipple's theme for this first lecture was Heroic Character, and that he "delineated graphically and beautifully the hero-soldier, led on by his love of glory; the hero-patriot, actuated by his love of country; the hero-reformer, moved by his love of humanity; and the hero-saint, animated by his love of God." The subject of his second lecture was Eccentric Character. The *Forum's* criticism was not very appreciative.

The third lecture was given December 10th, at the Baptist church, by Horace Mann. His subject was Young Men. The *Democrat*, in "reporting" the lecture, took this flattering unction to its soul: "As we looked around over the large assemblage of youth, beauty, intellect and fashion, and noted with what anxiety the sea of heads were turned toward the speaker, as if to catch the words ere they left his lips, we experienced a deep feeling of pride, and thought to ourselves, few places in any land, of equal age, population, etc., can boast of a more highly refined, intellectual community than are to be found in our own little embryo city."

The fourth lecture was given in the City Hall, by George William Curtis, December 12th. His subject was Young America, and for an hour and a half the speaker entranced his audience with his noble thought and pure diction. After referring to the Alps, Mr. Curtis said: "But there are loftier mountains than the Alps; there is a lovelier landscape than that unfolded by Italy, with all its richness and all its beauty. There is a land more beautiful, more voluptuous, more soul-satisfying; a region far away, but which every man has visited; a paradise into which no care, no sorrow, no vice ever enters; where Barnburners and Hunkers lie down together; where all heads are silver-gray, woolly; where painters praise each other's pictures; musicians are not jealous of their fellow artists; ladies with blue do not dislike brown eyes in others; where musicians on wintry, moonlight nights, serenading delightful damsels, blow their fingers and their instruments only for love. Millions have sailed for the shores of this fair country, with the faith of a Columbus or a Franklin, and millions have failed to reach them; like the child running to catch the setting sun only to grasp the cold grey of the evening, so we essay to gain the favored land; it is the California to which thousands sail, only to get wrecked on Cape Horn; it is the eyes of his mistress to the ardent lover, just before she jilted him. This favored land is the land of Fancy, pictured on the ardent soul of youth."

Horace Greeley followed Mr. Curtis. His theme was The Reforms of the Age. He spoke of the abolition and temperance movements, woman's rights, and the abolition of the death penalty. Mr. Greeley wrote his impressions of the Rock river valley at some length for the *New York Tribune*, from which this characteristic paragraph is taken: "I have traversed the Roman Campana (which is only a great wet prairie surcharged



with malaria and ruins), glanced at the great pastures of Belgium, and ridden across the prairies of central and northern Indiana by daylight, lamplight, and moonlight; but still I was nowhere in a discussion of the value and attractiveness of prairies—for I had never been on Rock river. But now, gentlemen! I give you fair warning that I take a back seat no longer when the felicities of western life and the genial fertility and Eden-like character of the prairies is under discussion—for I *have* been on Rock river! . . . I should like more springs, more running streams, and less lime in the water; but then Paradise is beyond Jordan, or some other stream, and is not wisely sought even on Rock river.”

The next speaker was Prof. Joseph Emerson, of Beloit, who spoke on Greek Civilization. W. H. Channing was announced for January 27th, but no reference to the lecture is found.

Ralph Waldo Emerson delivered the seventh lecture in the course February 3, 1854, in Warner's Hall. “Emerson's lecture,” says H. H. Waldo, “was not without its comical features. His subject was History. I believe it was the same as his essay with that title. One scintillation was this: ‘Time vanishes to shining ether the solid angularity of facts. Carthage was, but is not.’ This was only saying there was nothing permanent. He gave this thought in a matter-of-fact style. The hall was packed, but half the audience were sleepy. The lecture was pronounced by some to be a failure.”

Lectures were given during this season by Bishop Potter, Chancellor Lathrop; Judge Doolittle, of Wisconsin, on The Character of Washington; Bayard Taylor, two lectures, on the Arabs, and Japan and the Japanese. March 27, 1854, Ole Bull and Patti were in Rockford.

The course for 1854–55 included Rev. E. H. Chapin, Josiah Quincy, John G. Saxe, John Pierpont, James Russell Lowell, and Bayard Taylor. Dr. Chapin spoke on Modern Chivalry; Mr. Saxe gave a poem-lecture on Yankee Land; John Pierpont's theme was The Golden Calf; Lowell spoke on English Ballads, and Bayard Taylor, on India.

The course of 1855–56 was opened by Henry Ward Beecher, who spoke on Patriotism. He was followed by Wendell Phillips. T. Sarr King and Dr. Chapin were engaged for this course.

During the next few years Rockford was favored with P. A. Shillaber, Park Goodwin, John B. Gough, and Prof. Youmans.

In 1860 the Young Men's Association ceased to exist.

## CHAPTER LXIV.

A FRAGMENT OF POLITICAL HISTORY.—ROCKFORD BANKS.—NOTES.

ROCKFORD has claimed the honor of the birthplace of the Republican party, so far as a congressional nomination under that name is concerned. "Seven cities fought for Homer dead;" likewise many places have contended for the honor of the first party organization. Rockford's claim to the first congressional nomination is certainly not unreasonable; and even if it cannot be sustained, it will at least call attention to a notable political event.

When the Kansas-Nebraska bill was passed by congress in May, 1854, there was a general feeling in the old Whig and Democratic parties that the encroachments of the slave-power demanded more vigorous resistance. With this end in view, a call was issued August 8th, to the voters of the First Congressional district, for a mass meeting to be held in Rockford on the 30th instant. This call was signed by forty-six citizens of Rockford, only five of whom are now living. The meeting was called to order in the court house, and from there adjourned to the grove west of the Baptist church, between Court and Winnebago streets. E. B. Washburne had been elected a member of congress as a Whig two years before, and was of course a candidate for re-election. There were other Richmonds in the field: Turner and Sweet, of Freeport; Loop, of Rockford; and Hurlbut, of Belvidere. None of these were openly avowed candidates; but each was anxious for the prize. A committee on resolutions of one from each county was nominated. There was ambition mixed with patriotism. It was a time of breaking up of old parties, and the future was uncertain. How far would it be safe to declare against the action of congress? This was a serious question. The leaders were against Washburne, but the people were with him. There is a tradition that the committee on resolutions was directed somewhat by the suggestions of Stephen A. Hurlbut, in preparing anti-slavery resolutions so radical that Mr. Washburne, it was thought, could not accept a nomination upon them. But Mr. Washburne was equal to

the occasion. He declared that the resolutions met his most hearty approval; whereupon James Loop remarked, in language more emphatic than pious, that Washburne would swallow anything. Mr. Washburne was thereupon nominated as a Republican by this mass convention.

The regular Whig convention for the district was held September 6th, and Mr. Washburne was also made the nominee. His nomination was opposed by Mr. Hurlbut, who on the day of the convention is reported to have said: "When you say that E. B. Washburne is a good man, I agree with you. But when you say he is a wise man and a statesman, there is a chance for an argument. It has been said Mr. Washburne is a man of learning. But I say that as a man of learning, E. B. Washburne, of Fever river, Galena, possesses frightful limitations." Mr. Hurlbut was a consummate master of sarcasm, which he often used without mercy. But it has been said that while Hurlbut could make the better speech, Washburne won the votes; and on the whole, he was the more successful politician.

In the evening Mr. Washburne entertained his friends at a banquet at the City Hotel. Some time after this Whig convention, Mr. Hurlbut met H. H. Waldo, who had supported Mr. Washburne, and complimented him on his splendid fight, and said that, considering the material at hand, he had done well.

Thus was made one of the first, if not the very first, Republican nomination for member of congress. The strong anti-slavery sentiment of both parties had been intensified by the repeal of the Missouri compromise, under the leadership of Stephen A. Douglas, and the passage of the Illinois Black Laws, through the influence of John A. Logan. Like Saul of Tarsus before he saw a great light, Logan was dominated by prejudice; and, like Paul after his change, he bravely befriended those he formerly oppressed. General Logan always had the courage of his convictions; and his political change was sincere.

In 1854 Mr. Hurlbut thought he could take a more radical position on the slavery question than Mr. Washburne. He had left the south because he was in sympathy with northern principles. Stephen A. Hurlbut was born in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1815, and settled in Belvidere in 1845. He was the son of a Unitarian clergyman, and a brother of William Henry Hurlbut, for many years editor-in-chief of the *New York World*. He was commissioned a brigadier-general in 1861, commanded the Fourth division at the battle of Shiloh, and for that service



he was promoted to the rank of major-general, and assigned to the command of the Department of the Gulf. General Hurlbut was the first commander-in-chief of the Grand Army of the Republic; was appointed minister resident to the United States of Columbia, by President Grant. From 1873 to 1877 he represented the Fourth district in congress. In 1881 General Hurlbut was appointed United States minister to Peru, and died at Lima in the spring of the following year. Abraham Lincoln once said that Stephen A. Hurlbut was the ablest orator on the stump that Illinois had ever produced.

Edward D. Baker, E. B. Washburne, John F. Farnsworth, Stephen A. Hurlbut and Robert R. Hitt were men of national reputation who have served the several districts in which Rockford has from time to time been located. This record is scarcely less notable than that of the old Western Reserve district, which was represented by Elisha Whittlesey, Joshua R. Giddings and James A. Garfield, whose terms aggregated fifty-one years.

The banking house of Spafford, Clark & Ellis was founded in November, 1854. The firm consisted of C. H. Spafford, Dr. D. G. Clark, and E. F. W. Ellis. Dr. Clark came to Rockford in 1848. Two years later he went to California, and returned in 1853. Dr. Clark died October 4, 1861. Spafford, Clark & Ellis did business in the stone building on the alley, on the south side of State, between Main and Church, now owned by Hon. E. B. Sumner. This bank went into liquidation, and Mr. Spafford paid its obligations in full.

In 1854 was also established the banking house of Briggs, Spafford, & Penfield, in East Rockford, which became the Third National Bank. The members of the firm were C. C. Briggs, A. C. Spafford, and David Penfield.

January 1, 1855, the banking firm of Dickerman, Wheeler & Company began business on West State street. The firm consisted of W. A. Dickerman, Buel G. Wheeler, G. A. Sanford, R. P. Lane. This house became the Second National Bank.

Fuller & Tomkins began banking business in the Worthington Block, East Rockford, in 1853. The firm consisted of A. C. and E. L. Fuller, and Enos and N. C. Tomkins, all of Belvidere. The firm was later called E. L. Fuller & Company.

E. H. Potter & Company and Edward N. Kitchel were also in the banking business on the East side. These banks, with Roberson & Holland, founded in 1848, and Mr. Horsman's

bank, established in 1852, and which have been noted in preceding chapters, complete the roster of Rockford banks to 1861. It was a day of unstable currency, when "wild-cat" money was abundant, but worthless. This fact made banking a precarious business as compared with the splendid system of today.

In 1852 the first party of Swedish emigrants arrived in Rockford. They left their native land with no thought of coming to this city. Some were destined for Chicago, but upon arriving there, they were told there were better opportunities in the country. About twenty-five came to Rockford in 1852. Among these were S. A. Johnson, John Nelson, Andrew Hollem, P. G. Hollem, Alexander Anderson, Mr. and Mrs. Jonas Hokanson, P. A. Peterson, Sr., and wife, P. A. Peterson, Jr., Claus Peterson. John Stibb came in 1854. His son, Frank G., was the first male born in Rockford of Swedish parents, and Mrs. Augusta Lind, daughter of Jonas Anderson, was the first female. Emigrants continued to arrive annually for some years. The cholera in 1853-54 checked emigration, and later the civil war had the same result; and it was not until 1867 that the greatest Swedish emigration was reached in a single year. The Swedish early settlers have a society, whose records are kept in their native language.

In June, 1852, the Rock River Mutual Fire Insurance Company was granted a charter by the legislature. The company did quite a business for a time, but it was finally unsuccessful.

In 1853 the three-story, double-store brick block on the southwest corner of State and First streets, was built by Abraham I. Enoch, and his brother-in-law, Daniel Davis. Mr. Davis was a "forty-niner," and returned from California with quite an amount of ready money.

At the election in November, 1854, Wait Talcott was elected state senator; William Lyman, representative; John F. Taylor, sheriff; A. A. Chamberlain, sheriff.

Under a statute of February 27, 1854, the judge of the county court of Winnebago county was given jurisdiction in law and chancery, where the amount involved did not exceed one thousand dollars. This law was repealed February 12, 1863.

The earnings of the Galena & Chicago Union railroad for August, 1854, were \$103,000. The earnings for the corresponding month the preceding year were \$48,000.



## CHAPTER LXV.

### ROCKFORD SETTLERS 1851-54.

IN the early history of the county, Rockton, by reason of its water-power, was a rival of Rockford. As the latter began to forge more rapidly to the front, several of the settlers of Rockton from time to time sought the larger opportunities of the county seat. This exodus from the northern neighbor might be called the Rockton migration. Among those who came from Rockton to Rockford were James M. and J. Ambrose Wight and William Hulin, to whom reference has been made in early chapters, and Seely Perry, Jesse Blinn and Wait Talcott.

Seely Perry was born at Stockbridge, Massachusetts, August 22, 1822, and was graduated from Union college at Schenectady in 1845. Mr. Perry came to Rockton in 1849, and in 1851 he settled in Rockford. After teaching one year he engaged in the lumber trade, in which he has continued for nearly half a century. In 1846 Mr. Perry married Elizabeth Benedict, who died in 1874. She was the mother of Lewis Seely, and Mrs. Eva Moore, of St. Louis. In 1876 Mr. Perry married Marie Thompson. They have one daughter, Miss Marie. Mr. Perry was elected mayor of Rockford in 1858 and served one term. He is now the oldest living ex-mayor of the city. Mr. Perry has also served the city as alderman, member of the board of education, and a director of the public library.

Jesse Blinn was born in 1809 in Vermont, and from there he removed to Conneaut, Ohio. He came to Rockton in 1838; in 1850 he settled in Rockford, and his family a year later. He opened the first exclusive hardware store in the city. His stock invoiced \$10,000. He subsequently became a manufacturer on the water-power, to which reference has been made. Mr. Blinn died in 1879. Mrs. Blinn is a native of New Hampshire. She is descended from Lord James Loudon, whose estate is still preserved in Scotland. Mrs. Blinn has some autograph lines written by Robert Burns, commemorating his visit to Loudon castle. Joshua R. Giddings was entertained at Mr. Blinn's home when he made a political address in Rockford in 1854. Mrs. Blinn is residing with her daughter, Mrs. H. P. Holland.



Ralph Emerson was the son of Rev. Ralph Emerson, a Congregational clergyman, and a professor in Andover theological seminary, the oldest Congregational divinity school in the country. Another son is Professor Joseph Emerson, of Beloit. Mr. Emerson was born in Andover, Massachusetts, in 1831. He came to Rockford in 1852, and was later a partner with Jesse Blinn in the hardware business until they became interested in the water-power. The Emerson company has proved one of the most successful manufacturers in the west. This result may be attributed to Mr. Emerson's unusual executive ability. He has made a generous use of his large wealth in contributions to various religious enterprises. Mr. Emerson married Adaline Talcott, a daughter of Hon. Wait Talcott. They have had eight children. Two sons died in infancy, and in 1889 Ralph was killed by falling from a building during a fire on the water-power. Their daughters are Mrs. Adaline E. Thompson, Mrs. Harriet E. Hinchliff, Mrs. Mary Lathrop, Mrs. Belle E. Keith, and Mrs. Dora B. Wheeler, whose husband is a professor of biology in the University of Texas. In April, 1900, Mrs. Emerson was appointed by Governor Tanner to represent Illinois as a commissioner at the Paris exposition.

Hon. Wait Talcott was a son of William Talcott, and was born at Hebron, Connecticut, October 17, 1807. He came to Rockton in the autumn of 1838. He was one of the incorporators of Beloit college and Rockford seminary. In 1854 he came to Rockford and began his career as a manufacturer on the water-power with his brother, Sylvester. In 1854 he was elected state senator from the district comprising Winnebago, Carroll, Boone and Ogle counties. Upon the passage of the internal revenue act, President Lincoln appointed Mr. Talcott commissioner of internal revenue for the Second congressional district. This appointment was dated August 27, 1862, and Mr. Talcott served five years. Mr. Talcott preserved files of Chicago and Rockford newspapers, and upon his death, which occurred November 7, 1890, his son William A. Talcott, presented them in excellent bound condition to the Rockford public library.

John S. Coleman was a native of Delaware county, New York. In 1851 he removed with his family to Rockford and became a member of the banking firm of Robertson, Coleman & Company. He built the stone house on North Main street, now owned by William Nelson. Mr. Coleman was a trustee of Rock-

ford seminary and treasurer of the board, and a member of the city council. He was a man of high character and unostentatious life and manner, and his death was deeply mourned by the community. Mr. Coleman died April 6, 1864, in his fifty-eighth year.

James L. Loop was born in Steuben county, New York, in 1815. He settled in Belvidere in 1838, and some years later he formed a partnership with his brother-in-law, Stephen A. Hurlbut, in the practice of law. He was prosecuting attorney for the northern district of Illinois in 1843-5. From 1846 to 1850 Mr. Loop was secretary of the Illinois and Michigan canal, which office he resigned. In 1852 Mr. Loop removed to Rockford and formed a law partnership with William Lathrop. In 1856 he was elected mayor of Rockford and served one term. Mr. Loop's death occurred February 8, 1865, when he was fifty years of age. The remains were taken to Belvidere for burial. By the common consent of the Rockford bar, James L. Loop possessed the finest legal ability of any man who ever practiced in this city. His intellect was strong and his resources were at his instant command. His grasp of legal principles was due to his acute, intuitive sense of what was right between man and man, which was a gift from nature. Mr. Loop was always the genial gentleman. Like so many other gifted men, he was his own worst enemy, and his sad, untimely death was an impressive object lesson that strong drink is no respecter of persons.

William Lathrop is a native of Genesee county, New York. He came to Rockford in January, 1851. He was a partner with James L. Loop from 1853 to 1857. In 1856 Mr. Lathrop was elected a member of the legislature, and served one term. In 1876 he succeeded Stephen A. Hurlbut as member of congress from the Fourth district, and served one term. During his long residence in Rockford Mr. Lathrop has enjoyed a large and lucrative legal practice. His clientele has come from the influential portion of the community. He has in some respects the finest law library in the city, and the author takes pleasure in acknowledging his obligations to Mr. Lathrop for the free use of his library and for information personally given. Mr. Lathrop married Adaline Potter, a daughter of E. H. Potter. Their children are Mrs. Anna Case, of Charles City, Iowa; Miss Julia, a member of the state board of charities, and Edward, Robert and William.

Hon. John Early was born in Middlesex county, Canada



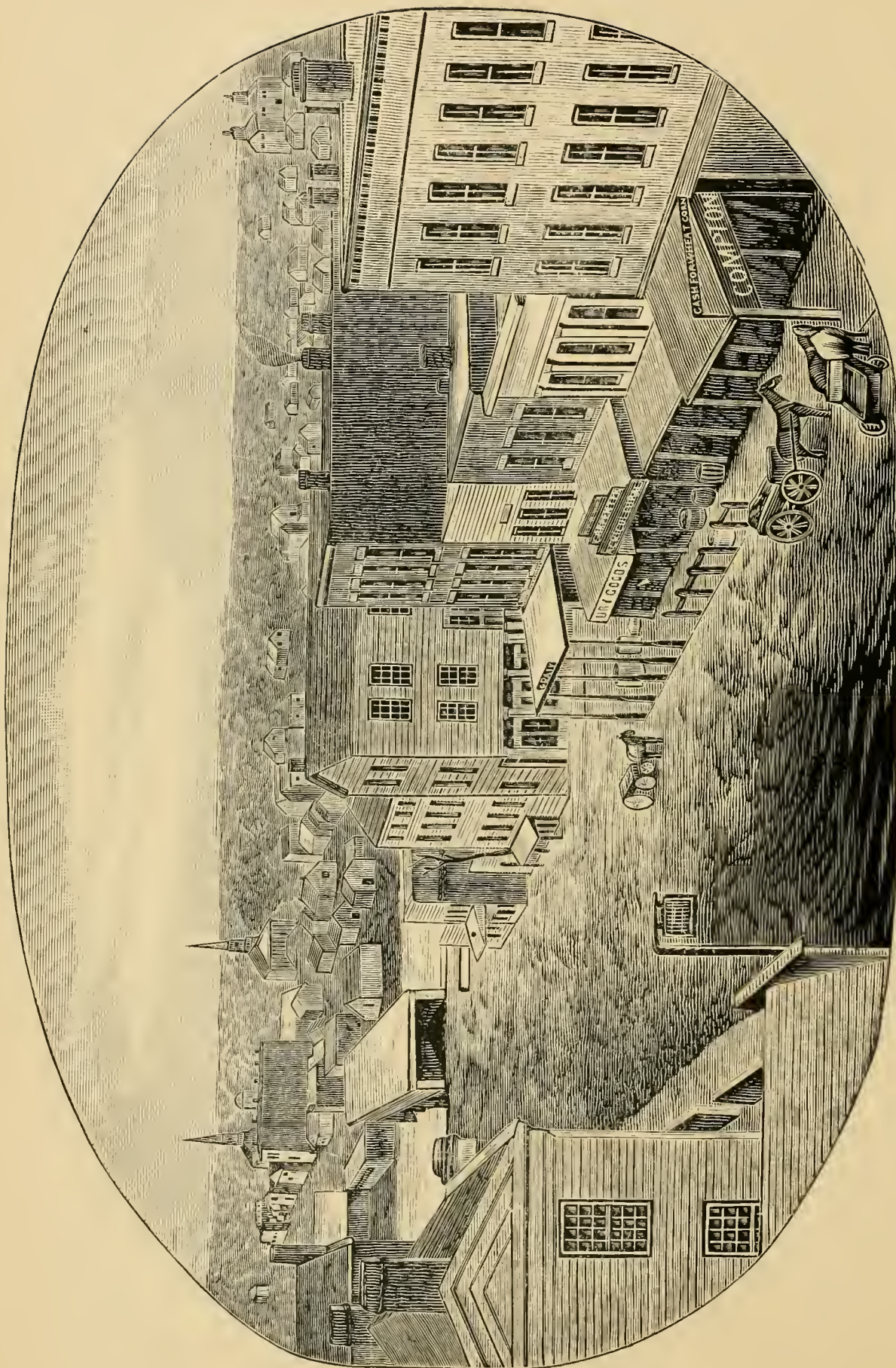
West, March 17, 1828. In 1846 he removed with his parents to Boone county, and in 1852 he settled in Rockford. He served three terms as assessor of Rockford. In 1869 he was appointed one of the first board of trustees of the reform school at Pontiac. In 1870 Mr. Early was elected state senator from the Twenty-third district, composed of Winnebago, Boone, McHenry and Lake counties. His senatorial colleague was General Allen C. Fuller, of Belvidere. After the state had been re-districted he was elected senator in 1872, from the Ninth district, which included Winnebago and Boone counties, and again in 1874, for the full term of four years. By the election of Governor Oglesby to the United States senate and Lieutenant-Governor Beveridge becoming governor, Mr. Early became acting lieutenant-governor of the state. Mr. Early died September 2, 1877. He was father of A. D. and John H. Early. Mrs. Early and Miss Bertha reside in East Rockford.

Lieutenant-Colonel Edward F. W. Ellis was born in Milton, Maine, April 15, 1819. He was admitted to the bar in Ohio. In 1849 he went to California, where he was unsuccessful in commercial speculation, and resumed the practice of law; in 1851 he was a member of the California legislature. Colonel Ellis came to Rockford in 1854 and became a member of the banking firm of Spafford, Clark & Ellis. Upon the outbreak of the civil war Colonel Ellis raised a company for the Fifteenth regiment, called the Ellis Rifles. He was chosen lieutenant-colonel, but was acting colonel at the time of his death. At the battle of Shiloh he was in command of the Fifteenth, which belonged to General Hurlbut's division. On Monday morning his regiment was exposed to a terrible fire and Colonel Ellis was struck in the breast by a ball, and instantly expired. Colonel Ellis was a tall, noble-looking man, of much decision of character. The city of Rockford mourned his death with profound sorrow. Colonel Ellis' home was the historic homestead lately owned by Dr. W. H. Fitch, on West State street. In 1856 the property was transferred to Colonel Ellis, and there he lived with his wife and children. The latter were Blanche, now Mrs. Chandler Starr; Alma Hortense, now Mrs. Fisher, of California, and Edward. The home was always characterized by generous hospitality.

Henry P. Kimball was a native of New Hampshire, and was graduated from Rochester university. Mr. Kimball came to Rockford in 1852, and taught school for some time. He had a







EAST STATE STREET AS SEEN IN 1855.—Published through the courtesy of the *Register-Gazette*.



local reputation as a horticulturist. As secretary of the Agricultural Society, Mr. Kimball achieved a unique distinction as a successful fair advertiser. Upon his invitation many of the most distinguished men of the last generation visited Rockford and made addresses. Among these were General Grant, Attorney-General Taft, Benjamin F. Butler, John A. Logan, Chief-Justice Waite, General Martindale, Wade Hampton, James R. Doolittle, Matt Carpenter, Benjamin F. Taylor and Will Carleton. In 1875 Mr. Kimball invited Jefferson Davis to deliver an address. This invitation created such excitement that Mr. Davis withdrew his acceptance. Mr. Kimball married Miss Ellen, a daughter of Dr. George Haskell. Their sons are Dr. Frank H., Willis M., and Carl Kimball. Mr. Kimball died May 10, 1889, when sixty years of age.

John Nelson was a native of West Gothland, Sweden, born April 5, 1830. He came to Rockford in 1852. His life was uneventful until a short time before his death, when he perfected the Nelson knitting machine, which revolutionized the knitting of hosiery. After General Grant had returned from his tour around the world, he visited Mr. Nelson's factory, and declared that he had never seen such perfect machinery for this purpose. Mr. Nelson died April 15, 1883. The Hotel Nelson is named in his honor.

A. E. Goodwin, M. D., was born August 11, 1827, at Chelsea, Vermont. He was graduated from Berkshire medical college at Pittsfield, Massachusetts. Dr. Goodwin came to Rockford in 1854. During the civil war he was a surgeon in the Eleventh Illinois infantry and in the One Hundred and Eighth. He was wounded at Vicksburg. Dr. Goodwin was a member of the city board of education and of the public library board. Dr. Goodwin died May 14, 1889. His only surviving child is Mrs. Robert Rew.

Chester C. Briggs was a native of Vermont. He was born in Dover, September 6, 1817. He was graduated from Dartmouth college, and edited the *Green Mountain Freeman*, an anti-slavery paper. In 1853 Mr. Briggs came to Rockford and became the senior member of the banking firm of Briggs, Spafford & Penfield. He was subsequently financial manager of the Kenosha Railroad company. In 1868 he became associated with the firm of Briggs, Mead & Skinner, in the manufacture of agricultural implements. The firm name was later changed to Briggs & Enoch. Mr. Briggs died January 24, 1892.



James G. Manlove was a native of Dover, Delaware, where he was born December 15, 1812. He was admitted to the bar in Wisconsin, and settled in Rockford in 1851, and began the practice of law. He held the offices of police magistrate, justice of the peace, town clerk and alderman, and the confidence which the people reposed in him is attested by his repeated elections as town clerk and justice of the peace. Mr. Manlove died November 6, 1891.

Robert P. Lane, M. D., was born in Hopewell, Bedford county, Pennsylvania, in 1818. He studied medicine with an uncle in his native state. Dr. Lane came to Rockford in 1851. He was a leader in the organization of the Rockford water-power company, and gave his personal attention to the construction of the dam. He was a member of the banking firm of Lane, Sanford & Company; one of the organizers of the Second National bank, and continuously served as its president from 1864 until 1881, when he resigned to accept the presidency of the Rockford Insurance Company. He had a fine personal presence and unusual suavity. He served as a member of the library board and was senior warden of the Episcopal church for forty years. Dr. Lane died March 7, 1891.

Anthony Haines was a native of Marietta, Pennsylvania, born April 21, 1829. He came to Rockford in 1854, and formed a partnership with Elisha A. Kirk for buying and shipping grain over the Kenosha railroad. In 1880 he, with other gentlemen, organized the Rockford Street Railway company, of which he was elected president and general manager. Mr. Haines, at the time of his death in 1898, was vice-president of the Manufacturers National Bank.

Charles O. Upton was born in North Reading, Massachusetts, in 1832, and came to Rockford in 1854. Mr. Upton has been prominent in the banking business of the city. He was a director of the Second National bank twenty years and the last two years was its vice-president. In 1889 he led in the organization of the Manufacturers National Bank, and was its president ten years. Mr. Upton served the public in the city council, on the county board, and as treasurer of Rockford one term. He now resides in Chicago.

Carlton W. Sheldon is a native of New York, born in Victor March 14, 1828. He came to Rockford in 1852, entered the law office of Jason Marsh, and was admitted to the bar in the autumn of the same year. In 1869 he entered the employ of

the Rockford Insurance Company as adjuster, and remained five years, and in 1874 he was elected secretary of the Forest City Insurance company, and held this position five years, when he resumed the practice of law. Mr. Sheldon has four children: Charles E., George, Mrs. Dora S. Hart, and Miss Ethel.

Isaac Utter was a native of New York. He came to Rockford in 1852, and formed a partnership with Orlando Clark, on the water-power. For twenty-one years he was associated with Levi Rhoades, in the manufacture of paper. Mr. Utter was a stockholder in the People's Bank and in the Winnebago and the Second National. He was a man of great energy, and good judgment in business affairs. Mr. Utter died May 7, 1888. He was father of Mrs. J. M. Fraley.

Alexander D. Forbes was born in Perthshire, Scotland, December 13, 1831. He came to Rockford in 1854, and in partnership with his father, Duncan Forbes, began business on the water-power. In 1864 they established the first malleable iron works west of Cincinnati. The father died in 1871. Mr. Forbes is now president of the People's bank.

Major Elias Cosper was born in Worcester, Ohio, in 1824. He came to Rockford in 1854, and entered the banking house of Robertson, Coleman & Company, as teller, and in 1857 he became its cashier. Upon the outbreak of the civil war Mr. Cosper sold his interest in the bank and entered the service with Company E, Seventy-fourth regiment. After the battle of Chickamauga he was promoted to the rank of major and paymaster of the army. Upon his return to civil life, Mr. Cosper, in company with T. D. Robertson, Melancthon Starr, and John P. Manny, organized the John P. Manny Reaper Company, and was its manager. Since 1874 Mr. Cosper has been connected with the Rockford Tack Company, and is its secretary and treasurer. Mr. Cosper may be called the father of the public library. He spent much time in soliciting subscriptions and was a member of the board of directors for more than twenty years. Mr. Cosper has a fine private library of about thirteen hundred volumes.

John G. Penfield is a native of Vermont and settled in Rockford in 1854. Since that time he has been continuously in business as a broker and dealer in real estate and insurance. Mrs. Penfield gave the lot to the First Congregational church on which the parsonage now stands. They have three daughters: Mrs. Charles E. Sheldon, Mrs. Helen Revelle and Miss Kate.



William A. Knowlton was a native of Chautauqua county, New York, and removed to the west when a young man. He came to Rockford in 1853 from Freeport, Illinois. After the death of J. H. Manny, Mr. Knowlton became business agent for Mrs. Manny. He retained this position several years, and was eminently successful. Mr. Knowlton was subsequently engaged in various manufacturing enterprises. He sustained financial reverses, and in the autumn of 1891 he removed to Chicago, where he died September 17th of the following year. Mr. Knowlton was sixty years of age. His surviving family consisted of Mrs. Knowlton and five children: Mrs. Helen Gibson, Mrs. Fred S. Hardy, Misses Evaline and Mary, and William A. Knowlton, Jr. Miss Evaline recently died in the east.

John P. Manny was born in Amsterdam, New York, March 8, 1823. He settled at Waddam's Grove, Stephenson county, in 1842. He came to Rockford in 1852, and for several years he manufactured knife sections for J. H. Manny's machines. Early in the sixties he perfected several inventions, which were handled by N. C. Thompson. After the war Mr. Manny became interested in the John P. Manny Company, in which he was associated with Elias Cosper, T. D. Robertson and Melancthon Starr. This company and Mr. Thompson paid him royalties upon his inventions, and the Mississippi river was the dividing line between their respective territories. Mr. Manny's income from this source was at one time forty thousand dollars a year. He purchased the John S. Coleman estate on North Main street, which was his home for many years. This property is now owned by William Nelson. While residing at Waddam's Grove Mr. Manny married Miss Eunice Hicks. George J. was their only son who attained his majority. He died in 1892, leaving one son, Dwight, an employe of the Winnebago National Bank. Miss Florida Manny, a daughter, is also a resident of the city. Mrs. J. P. Manny died in 1864, and in 1867 Mr. Manny married a daughter of Melancthon Starr. They had four children: Mrs. Charles Sackett, John Starr Manny, Virginia and Henry Manny. Mr. Manny died November 16, 1897.

Among other well-known citizens who came to Rockford during this period were: Horace Brown, T. J. L. Remington, 1850; J. M. Southgate, Andrew G. Lowry, Horace Buker, 1852; Jacob Hazlett, D. A. Barnard, Samuel Ferguson, 1853; Henry Fisher, Melancthon Smith, T. W. Carrico, William and George R. Forbes, 1854.



## CHAPTER LXVI.

### THE FREE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM.

THE free public school system of Illinois dates from 1855. In December, 1853, a large common school convention met at Jerseyville, composed of many adjoining counties, and one at Bloomington, for the whole state. These movements produced results. The general assembly, which met the following February, separated the office of state superintendent of public instruction from that of secretary of state, and made it a distinct department of the state government. The state superintendent was required to draft a bill embodying a system of free education for all the children of the state, and report to the next general assembly. March 15, 1854, Governor Matteson appointed Hon. N. W. Edwards, state superintendent. In the following January Mr. Edwards presented a bill which became a law February 15, 1855. For state purposes the school tax was fixed at two mills on the one hundred dollars. To this was added the interest from the permanent school fund. A free school was required to be maintained for at least six months in each year, and it was made imperative upon the directors of every school district to levy the necessary tax. Thus the free school system of Illinois began when the taxing power of the state was invoked in its behalf.

The school law was bitterly opposed, and narrowly escaped repeal. Sir William Berkeley, the royal governor of Virginia, said in 1670: "I thank God there are no free schools nor printing, and I hope we shall not have these hundred years." The spirit of this pious wish prevailed in southern Illinois; and there was a repetition of the old conflict between the two distinct classes of people in the two portions of the state. The southern portion was poor, while the northern portion was well-to-do; and it was only as it was made to appear to the southern portion that it was receiving more from the state school fund than it was contributing, that the people acquiesced in the law.

The charter of 1854 had conferred upon the city council of Rockford full power over its schools. June 20, 1855, the council passed its first school ordinance under the new school law. The city was divided into two school districts: East side, number one; West side, number two. A board of school inspectors was appointed, consisting of George Haskell, A. S. Miller, and Jason Marsh, after whom the Marsh school was named. In December the board voted to purchase of A. W. Freeman his lease of the basement of the First Baptist church for a school in district number two. Mr. Freeman was employed to teach at \$800 per year. At the same time H. Sabin was engaged for the first district, and the old court house on the East side was leased.

The council had provided by ordinance for a school agent for each district, whose acts were to be approved by the council. July 27, 1855, the agent for the first district was authorized to purchase from Solomon Wheeler, the tract on which the Adams school now stands. September 10th a contract was made for the construction of the building. April 28, 1856, a contract was made for a schoolhouse in the second district, on the site of the Lincoln school; the contractors were E. N. House, M. H. Regan, and James B. Howell. The progress of the buildings was delayed by unfavorable weather, and the late arrival of school furniture.

August 14, 1857, in the afternoon and evening, occurred the formal dedication of the two union school buildings. Previous to this time Rockford had no schoolhouse of its own.

The first district school had three principals from 1857 to 1884. The first was Orlando C. Blackmer, who was appointed March 10, 1857. His assistant was S. F. Penfield. Mr. Blackmer is a brother of Mrs. N. C. Thompson. He is now living at Oak Park.

Henry Freeman, Mr. Blackmer's successor, is a native of Massachusetts, born within twenty miles of Plymouth Rock. He was graduated from Teachers' seminary, Andover, Massachusetts, in 1839, and taught for one year in the preparatory department. Prof. Freeman began his life-work as principal of the high school at Bridgeton, New York, in 1840. In 1845 he was offered the principalship of Salem academy, at Salem, New Jersey, where he remained five years, until he was elected principal of Wallkill academy, at Middletown, New York. In 1855 he was called to the position of principal of the high school and

superintendent of schools of Freeport, Illinois. In 1859 the board of school inspectors invited Prof. Freeman to take the position of principal and superintendent of schools of East Rockford, at a salary of one thousand dollars a year. This position he filled twenty-one years, until he resigned in 1880. During this long service hundreds of pupils came under the influence of the principal. Prof. Freeman had high ideals of life, and his strong character was a potent factor in promoting that which was for the best interest of the pupils. His conscientious efforts were appreciated, and occasionally his former pupils gather informally at his home and recall reminiscences of those formative years.

The third and last principal was Prof. McPherson, who remained until 1884. George G. Lyon was chosen principal of the Second district school, March 10, 1857. He was succeeded by E. M. Fernald, E. N. Weller, J. H. Blodgett, and W. W. Stetson.

October 21, 1861, the number of school inspectors was increased from three to five. In 1884 the city of Rockford was made one school district, with one high school, in pursuance of an ordinance drawn by Hon. Alfred Taggart.

Provision was made for the construction of Kent school-house for South Rockford, soon after the arrangements had been made for the East and West side schools. This school for the greater part of the intervening time has been in charge of one man. Prof. O. F. Barbour, a native of Ohio, came to Rockford in 1859, and was for a time engaged in the dry goods business. In September, 1866, he became principal of the Kent school, and has retained this position for thirty-four years. For more than twenty years Mr. Barbour has also been a member of the library board.

The general law of 1872 for the incorporation of cities was silent on the school question, and when Rockford was organized under the general law, it retained the school features of its special charter. School boards are elected by popular vote in other cities of the state, and have the taxing power. Rockford stands alone, with its board of school inspectors, appointed by the mayor, which has only advisory power. No subsequent statute concerning boards of education will apply to Rockford, and it would require new legislation at Springfield to change the board from an appointive to an elective body.



## CHAPTER LXVII.

### THE FIRST PUBLIC LIBRARY.—WESLEYAN SEMINARY.

The agitation for a public library began in 1852. Several years elapsed, however, before a library was established, and information concerning these early efforts are very meagre.

The Sinissippi Division No. 134 of the Sons of Temperance, of Rockford, surrendered its charter to the grand division April 15, 1852. Its former members resolved to reorganize under the name of the Rockford Library Association. All members of the division who had paid their quarterly dues to the close of the preceding quarter, were to be equal sharers in the library. A request was made in the *Forum* of April 21st for the return of all books belonging to the library. Thus, so far as known, the first circulating library was the small number of books owned by the Sons of Temperance. The *Forum* of October 27th published a call for a meeting of the trustees of the Library Association for October 30th, and for the annual meeting of the stockholders on the first Saturday of November. No other reference to the library is found immediately thereafter.

At the annual meeting of the Young Men's Association, September 11, 1855, it was proposed to extend its sphere of usefulness by providing a library and reading-room. A committee of three was appointed to confer with the old Library Association, with a view of obtaining its books. So far as can be learned, this effort to establish a library and reading-room was not successful.

It was not until March, 1857, that the first successful effort to establish a library was made. In that month a subscription paper was circulated, with the following statement of its object:

"We, the undersigned, agree to take the number of shares set opposite our names, in an association to be incorporated under the general law of this state, for the purpose of the establishment of a public library in the city of Rockford. Said library to be under the management and control of a board of trustees, to be elected by the stockholders.

"Shares to be fifty dollars each. Ten dollars per share payable upon the formation of the association, and ten dollars per share per annum thereafter, in such amounts and at such times as shall be determined by the said board of trustees. Shares subject to forfeiture by the trustees for non-payment of installments."

The first four names upon the list pledged twelve hundred dollars, and by the autumn of 1858 six thousand dollars had been pledged. William L. Rowland collected a considerable portion of this amount, and a schedule of cash payments has been preserved by him. The library was duly organized October 14, 1858. Rooms were secured on the third floor of Robertson, Coleman & Company's bank. James M. Wight, Seely Perry, Selden M. Church, Elias Cosper, and Thomas D. Robertson constituted the first board of trustees; Elias Cosper was chairman; Spencer Rising, treasurer; F. H. Bradley, librarian. The original board was composed of gentlemen of exceptional literary equipment. Others rendered efficient aid in the selection of books. Among them was William L. Rowland, who was subsequently appointed librarian of the public library. The books, although few in number, possessed very high merit. The number of volumes at this time was about one thousand; number of magazines and newspapers, thirty-eight. During the next few years the library steadily received accessions. According to the annual report of the stockholders, made October 11, 1860, there were 1,134 volumes. There had been drawn during the year ending October 4th, 1,669 volumes. This was an increase of 396 over the preceding year. Several gentlemen acted as librarian for short terms, and received a nominal compensation. Among those who rendered this service were John F. Squier and Hosmer P. Holland.

This library served its purpose several years; but during the war popular interest began to decline. The library was finally closed, and about 1865 the books were sold at public auction in a building on North Main street, directly north of Mr. Ashton's block. Some of these books are now in the public library, and quite a number, in excellent condition, are in the private library of Robert H. Tinker. The first library was organized under a general law, and was entirely supported by private subscriptions and annual fees. It was not until 1872 that the legislature enacted a law which provided for a tax for the support of public libraries.

In the summer of 1856 a movement was begun for the founding of a co-educational seminary in Rockford, under the control of the Methodist Episcopal church. February 14, 1857, an act of the legislature was approved, to incorporate the Rockford Wesleyan seminary. The incorporators were E. F. W. Ellis, T. D. Robertson, D. W. Ticknor, and W. F. Stewart. There were to be twelve trustees, appointed by the stockholders, eight of whom should at all times be members of the Methodist Episcopal church. A board of three visitors was to be appointed by the annual Rock River conference. The company was to have a capital stock of one hundred thousand dollars, divided into shares of one hundred dollars each.

A farm of about two hundred and sixteen acres was purchased of William M. Rowland. It adjoined Judge Church's farm on the west, and extended north to the State road. The purchase price and accrued interest amounted to nearly twenty thousand dollars. A large portion of this tract was platted into town lots, and it was proposed to build a college suburban town. The sale of lots occurred April 29, 1857. The subscribers to stock purchased lots. Rev. W. F. Stewart had been transferred from the Ohio to the Rock River conference, and had been assigned to the Second or Court Street church. Rev. Stewart was made purchasing agent for the seminary by the annual conference.

August 31, 1857, the ceremony of breaking ground for the seminary buildings took place under the direction of Rev. T. M. Eddy, who was in attendance upon Rock River conference, which was then in session in Rockford. Several hundred people were in attendance. An address was made by Rev. J. C. Stoughton, agent of Clark seminary; and Rev. W. F. Stewart gave a brief history of the origin of the seminary movement.

When the ground was broken, fifty-seven thousand dollars had been subscribed. The enterprise, however, was unsuccessful. Quite a number of houses were built, but in time several of them migrated into town on rollers, and the land reverted to farming purposes.

In October, 1857, Rev. Stewart began the publication of the *Rockford Wesleyan Seminary Reporter*, in the interest of the seminary. Only four numbers were published. Both Rev. Stewart and Rev. Stoughton have died within the past few months.



## CHAPTER LXVIII.

### BAYARD TAYLOR'S TRIBUTE.—FRATERNITIES.—NOTES.

BAYARD TAYLOR, in a letter to the *Tribune*, published in the spring of 1855, paid Rockford this generous tribute: "I last wrote to you from Rockford, the most beautiful town in northern Illinois. It has the advantage of an admirable water-power, furnished by the Rock river; of a rich, rolling prairie, which is fast being settled and farmed on all sides, of a fine building material in its quarries, of soft yellow limestone, resembling the Roman travertine; and of an unusually enterprising and intelligent population. Knowing all these advantages, I was not surprised at the evidences of growth since my first visit a year ago. People are flocking in faster than room can be furnished, and the foundations of two new hotels, on a large scale, show the requirements of the place. I was pleased to note that taste keeps pace with prosperity here, as elsewhere in the northwest. The new Unitarian church is a simple but very neat Gothic edifice, and the residences of Mr. Holland and Mr. Starr are very fine specimens of home architecture. The grounds of the former are admirably laid out; there is nothing better of the kind on the Hudson."

The charter of Winnebago Lodge No. 31, Independent Order of Odd Fellows, was issued by Geo. W. Woodward, grandmaster of Illinois, in 1847, to the following named charter members: Selden M. Bronson, Ansel Kenfield, Dewitt Clinton Briggs, Frederick H. Maxwell, and Rev. Nathaniel P. Heath. The lodge was instituted August 11, 1847. The place of meeting was Horsman's block, on the West side.

Rockford Lodge, No. 102, Masons, was organized February 13, 1851, under a dispensation from C. G. Y. Taylor, the grand master. The following named citizens constituted its first membership: Alfred E. Ames, William Lyman, Henry Carpenter, C. H. Spafford, William Hulin, E. H. Baker, Ansel Kenfield, John Fraley, James P. Burns, W. F. Ward, Jesse Blinn, and Buel G. Wheeler. E. H. Baker was the last survivor of this original membership.

Social Lodge, No. 140, Odd Fellows, was instituted February 6, 1854.

Winnebago Chapter No. 24, Masons, was organized December 12, 1854, under a dispensation from Louis Watson, grand high priest. The following constituted its first membership: A. Clark, Chauncy Ray, W. F. Parrish, H. Miltimore, John A. Holland, L. P. Pettibone, R. H. Cotton, Abiram Morgan, G. D. Palmer, and Ansel Kenfield. This chapter was constituted under another charter in December, 1855.

Star in the East Lodge No. 166, Masons, was organized February 12, 1855, under a dispensation from James L. Anderson, grand master. The charter members were: E. F. W. Ellis, R. H. Cotton, W. M. Bowdoin, William Hulin, S. G. Chellis, Jos. K. Smith, Joseph Burns, C. I. Horsman, B. G. Wheeler, G. W. Reynolds, John A. Holland, C. H. Richings, D. G. Clark, Adam McClure, Holder Brownell.

The dispensation for Rockford Encampment, No. 44, Odd Fellows, was granted August 5, 1857, to the following patriarchs as charter members: James Fleming, J. H. Clark, Hugh Strickland, Enos C. Clark, G. A. Stiles, Joseph Schloss, and Robert Smith. The encampment was instituted by Deputy Grand Patriarch A. E. Jenner, August 26, 1857.

The Rockford Burns Club was organized November 5, 1858. It is an association of Scottish-Americans, who meet annually on the birthday of Robert Burns.

John A. Phelps, a Rockford attorney, died July 28, 1854. The bar of the city adopted resolutions of respect, and attended his funeral in a body.

September 6, 1854, the city council passed an ordinance for the construction of sidewalks.

About 1855 James S. Ticknor was appointed agent of the American Express Company, and held this position until 1881. Mr. Ticknor came to Rockford in 1854. He was preceded by his brother, D. W., who came in 1846, and taught school. The brothers were in the drug and book business a short time. J. S. Ticknor died September 18, 1899.

February 15, 1855, a charter was granted the Rockford Central Railroad Company. The incorporators were Rockford citizens. It was proposed to make a connection with the Illinois Central at Mendota, and run through Rockford to the Wisconsin pineries, and make a north and south line to Cairo.

Piles were driven in Rock river at Rockford, for a bridge, which are now used by the Burlington company. The route was surveyed, but no track was laid.

In February, 1855, the Rockford Gas Light and Coke Company was incorporated. The incorporators were Simon M. Preston, William Lyman, John Platt, Henry Fisher, and Jesse Blinn. A few years later Thomas Butterworth was made its manager, and he finally became the owner of the plant.

May 17, 1855, occurred the sale of several hundred acres of canal lands in Winnebago county. These lands were selected as a part of the grant to the state of Illinois by the general government, to aid in building the Illinois and Michigan canal.

In 1855 the legislature passed a very stringent prohibitory liquor bill, known as the Maine law. The bill was not to go into effect unless approved by a majority of the popular vote at an election to be held June 4th of that year. The vote in Winnebago county was a splendid endorsement of the bill. Every township in the county sustained the measure. The vote in Rockford was as follows: for the law, 752; against, 71. The vote of the county was: 2,153 in favor of the law; against it, 363. The bill was lost, however, in the state.

July 14, 1855, the starch factory belonging to Lewis, Smyth & Company was destroyed by fire. The loss was about \$15,000.

The death of John A. Holland occurred September 29, 1855, at Mount Vernon, Ohio, while he was on a visit to his father-in-law, who resided there, in company with his family. The remains were brought to Rockford for burial. Resolutions of respect were adopted by the Masonic bodies and by the bar of the city. The funeral was held at the Unitarian church on Sunday. Rev. Mr. Murray, the pastor, preached the discourse. John A. Holland was born in what is now West Virginia. He came to Rockford in 1845, from Worcester, Ohio, where he had practiced law. He formed a partnership with T. D. Robertson in the practice of his profession. He was the attorney for the Galena & Chicago Union railroad, and assisted the Illinois Central in securing the right of way from Chicago to Cairo. Mr. Holland was an attendant at the Unitarian church, but was not a member. He was a man of comprehensive mind, great energy and sagacity, and always operated upon a large scale. He was a leading spirit in every public enterprise. The Holland House was named in his honor. Mr. Holland was father of Hosmer P. Holland. His second wife was a daughter of Dr. J. C. Goodhue.



## CHAPTER LXIX.

### MURDER OF SHERIFF TAYLOR.—EXECUTION OF COUNTRYMAN.

TUESDAY, November 11, 1856, John F. Taylor, sheriff of Winnebago county, was instantly killed by Alfred Countryman. On that day Alfred and John Countryman came to Rockford from Ogle county with some cattle, which they offered for sale at such low prices as to arouse suspicion. The cattle were sold for a sum below their market value. The purchasers delayed payment until notice had been given the sheriff, and papers made out for the apprehension of the brothers, which occurred about nine o'clock in the morning. They were then arrested on suspicion; and before they were taken to jail Sheriff Taylor searched them for concealed weapons. He found pistol balls in Alfred's pockets, and upon inquiring for his revolver the prisoner replied that he had none. Sheriff Taylor, assisted by Constable Thompson, then started with the prisoners for the jail. Just as they reached the steps Alfred Countryman broke away from the sheriff, leaped over the fence on Elm street, and ran down that street, with the sheriff in pursuit. At the next corner, near the livery stable of Hall & Reynolds, the sheriff had nearly overtaken Countryman, and was about to seize him, when the latter drew a pistol which he had concealed, and fired. The sheriff staggered a few paces, and fell. His only words were: "I'm shot; catch him."

Countryman ran to the woods north of Kent's creek, with hundreds of infuriated citizens in pursuit. John Platt was the first to overtake him. He took his pistol from him, and, with assistance, secured his arrest. Amid threats of lynching, the prisoner was placed in jail and securely ironed. Samuel I. Church, the sheriff-elect, briefly addressed the crowd and assured them that the prisoner was secure.

Sheriff Taylor was thirty-one years of age, and left a wife, and a son a year and a half old. He was an excellent officer, and was held in high respect by the community. The funeral was held Thursday on the public square, adjoining the jail,

under the charge of the Masonic fraternity. The board of supervisors were in attendance in a body. The discourse was preached by Rev. W. F. Stewart.

Countryman was indicted and tried for the murder of Sheriff Taylor, at the following February term of the circuit court. The prosecution was conducted by U. D. Meacham, the state's attorney, assisted by William Brown. The counsel for the defense was Orrin Miller and T. J. Turner. The following gentlemen constituted the jury: Levi Tunks, Philo C. Watson, Anthony M. Felmly, Silas G. Tyler, Jacob B. Place, G. R. Ames, Allen Rice, Charles Works, J. W. Jenks, Edward Peppers, J. W. Knapp, S. P. Collier. The trial began on Monday, February 23d. The case was given to the jury on Thursday; and Friday morning they returned a verdict of guilty. Judge Sheldon pronounced the sentence of death upon Countryman. One of his counsel, Mr. Miller, tried to obtain a stay of proceedings, so as to bring the case before the supreme court. But Judge Caton refused to grant a writ of error.

On Friday, March 27th, Countryman was executed on the farm of Sheriff Church, a short distance from the city. The execution was witnessed by eight thousand people. In the absence of a military company, the two fire companies, armed with sabres and carbines, formed a hollow square at the jail, into the center of which the carriages, which were to form the procession, were driven, and as the procession moved to the place of execution, the fire companies formed a strong guard. Upon arriving at the scaffold, Rev. Hooper Crews offered an earnest prayer. The prisoner made a short speech and professed repentance and forgiveness for his crime. At seventeen minutes past two the bolt was withdrawn, and Countryman was swung into eternity. His father, sister and one brother witnessed the execution. Before the body was taken down, Sheriff Church addressed the crowd as follows: "These painful proceedings being now concluded, and the sword of justice about to be returned to its sheath, I hope never again to be drawn with so much severity, I would thank you all for the good order you have maintained—your conduct does credit to the city, and I hope you will observe the same decorum in retiring."

## CHAPTER LXX.

KENOSHA AND ROCKFORD RAILROAD.—EARLY MANSIONS.—NOTES.

IN 1856 was projected a railroad to connect Kenosha on Lake Michigan with Rockford. It was a part of the original plan that this line should extend from Rockford to Rock Island. January 20, 1857, a charter was granted to John M. Capron, Egbert Ayer, Thomas Paul, John Cornell, W. B. Ogden, John Bradley, Jason Marsh, George Haskell, David S. Penfield, Robert P. Lane, C. C. Briggs, C. H. Spafford, A. S. Miller, Jesse Blinn and Seely Perry. The company was to have a capital stock of eight hundred thousand dollars, to be divided into shares of one hundred dollars each, and was authorized to construct a road from a point near the state line in McHenry county to Rockford. This road was built as a means of relieving Rockford from burdens imposed by the high freight and passenger rates of the Galena & Chicago Union.

Books for subscriptions to the stock of the road were opened early in November, 1856, and on the 25th of the same month the company was organized by the election of the following officers: President, C. H. Spafford; vice-president, R. P. Lane; secretary, E. H. Baker; treasurer, A. C. Spafford; executive committee, J. Bond, J. M. Capron, R. P. Lane, D. S. Penfield and Seely Perry. The subscriptions were made largely by farmers along the line, who gave mortgages on their real estate to secure their payments. The company negotiated these mortgages in payment for iron, labor and other expenses in the building of the road. When these obligations matured many of the subscribers could not redeem them, and the holders of the mortgages foreclosed them.

The contract for the construction of the road to Harvard was made in March, 1857, and the work was begun shortly afterward. The eastern division of the road was under the control of another company, organized under a charter from the Wisconsin legislature. The progress of construction was impeded by financial embarrassments, arising from the great depression which spread over the country in 1857, and the enter-



prise languished. In August, 1858, the company applied to the council of Rockford for a loan of the city credit to the amount of \$50,000 to aid in the completion of the road. An election was held September 2d, and the measure was carried by a majority of more than five hundred. This is the only instance in the history of Rockford of the loan of the credit of the corporation to a railroad.

November 21, 1859, the road was completed between Rockford and Harvard, and the event was celebrated by a banquet at the Holland House the same evening. In 1864 the Galena & Chicago Union Railroad Company was absorbed by the Chicago & Northwestern, and the Kenosha & Rockford road, as a matter of course, soon came under the same control.

The most beautiful home in Rockford during the period covered by this history, was that of Mrs. J. H. Manny, on South Main street. The "Manny mansion" was built in 1854, by John A. Holland. The grounds had a frontage of three hundred and twenty-five feet, and extended from the northern limit of G. N. Safford & Company's lumber yard to a point below Kent's creek, and were fronted by a stone fence. The beauty of these grounds was due, in large measure, to John Blair, a Scottish landscape gardener, who came from Canada at Mr. Holland's solicitation. He laid out the grounds, and set the standard for landscape gardening in Rockford, and in this way he left his impress on the city. Mr. Blair subsequently laid out the grounds of the Elgin insane asylum. It is said he now lies near Victoria, British Columbia. After the death of Mr. Holland, in 1855, financial reverses overtook his family, and about 1860 this splendid estate passed into the ownership of Mrs. J. H. Manny.

The fine estate which adjoined Mrs. Manny's on the south was owned by Rev. Lansing Porter, the first pastor of the Second Congregational church. He built the stone fence which fronted the property. Mr. Porter sold this home to Elias Cospers, and he in turn sold it to S. C. Withrow, who, in the course of a few years, completed a beautiful home.

The *Rockford Register*, of August 30, 1856, made this announcement: "We have been shown the plans for a beautiful residence to be erected by Mr. Seely Perry. . . It is to be of brick, built in the Italian style of architecture, with cupola, verandas, etc., and it is estimated will cost some \$5,000 or \$6,000. The lot chosen for its erection is on the height above

Mr. Marsh's fine residence, east side of the city, and commands a splendid prospect." This has in late years been familiarly known as the Schmauss property, and is now occupied as St. Anthony hospital. Forty years ago it was called "Perry's castle." Mr. Perry, however, called it "Perry's folly."

In 1861, C. C. Briggs erected a substantial residence on East State street. It was built of Milwaukee brick, two stories, with cupola, and ornamented by a veranda, extending the entire length of the building on the west. Its estimated cost was \$9,000. It stands today like a deserted castle, frowning upon the pleasant modern homes that have intruded upon its former spacious grounds.

Judge Church's substantial stone residence on South Avon street was built in 1857, and is today one of the finest houses in the city.

Gilbert Woodruff's spacious mansion was built by E. H. Potter. When financial reverses came to him, he disposed of the property to C. A. Shaw, father of Mrs. J. M. Southgate.

The fine residence owned by Mrs. David Keyt, south of the city, was built by Orlando Clark, of the firm of Clark & Utter.

Allen Gibson, secretary of the Rock River Mutual Insurance Company, built the residence now owned by Thomas D. Robertson. Mr. Gibson expended \$20,000 in the construction of this house and later improvements.

The year 1856 is memorable in history for the fierce struggle for freedom in Kansas. On the 19th and 20th of May, Charles Sumner delivered his celebrated speech in the senate, on The Crime Against Kansas. It was marked by the usual characteristics of his more elaborate efforts, exhibiting great affluence of learning, faithful research, and great rhetorical finish and force. It was, in the words of the poet Whittier, "a grand and terrible philippic." On the 22d of May following, Senator Sumner was brutally assaulted in the senate chamber, by Preston S. Brooks, a representative from South Carolina. Circumstances combined to create an enormous demand for Mr. Sumner's speech.

The following letter, written by Hon. E. B. Washburne to Francis Burnap, of Rockford, is interesting in this connection, because it has never before been published, and by reason of Mr. Washburne's prophetic utterances. The full text of the letter is as follows :



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, JUNE 2, 1856.—*My Dear Sir:* The demand for Sumner's speech is so great that it will [be] some time before your order can be filled. They cost two dollars per hundred, instead of one. We want to get a big edition of Bissell's great speech made in 1850 for circulation in our state. I find the twenty-dollar draft from you here. The excitement everywhere in the north is terrific. If we make no mistakes, and act earnestly and discreetly, the rule of the slave-power now ceases. Mr. Sumner is getting along. He was terribly beaten, but his blood will be avenged.

Yours truly, E. B. WASHBURNE.

F. BURNAP, ESQ.

In 1854 Anson S. Miller laid the foundation for his new hotel on the southwest corner of State and Court streets. The hotel was planned on a large scale. The foundation walls were four and a half feet thick at the base. The structure was to be built of cream-colored limestone, four stories high, with an attic and basement, which made it nearly equivalent to six stories. The size was to be one hundred feet on State street, by one hundred and twenty on Court, and its estimated cost was \$40,000. Mr. Miller was unable to realize his ambition, and the work was abandoned after the walls were laid.

The Winnebago National Bank block was completed for Robertson, Coleman & Company, in 1855. Messrs. Ticknor & Brother and O. Dickerman built the block adjoining, of same general style, a few months later.

In June, 1855, a joint stock company, organized under the authority of an act of the legislature, began the erection of the Holland House, an extensive hotel which received its name from John A. Holland. The hotel was completed the following spring, and April 30th an elaborate inauguration festival was given by the citizens to Messrs. Pierce & Bingham, the proprietors. Isaac N. Cunningham, the former landlord of the Winnebago House, was chairman of the committee on arrangements, and presided at the tables. Brief addresses were made by Judge Church, Mayor James L. Loop, Jason Marsh, Dr. Lyman, William Hulin, Melancthon Starr, C. I. Horsman and T. D. Robertson. Like most enterprises of this kind, undertaken in the interior cities of the west, the property was unremunerative, and passed into private hands. A man by the name of Baldwin held mortgage bonds, and foreclosed. He bid in the prop-



erty at the sale, and then sold it to Robertson & Starr. Mr. Starr purchased the interest of his partner, and sold the hotel to his son, H. N. Starr. Later owners were W. B. Sink and C. W. Brown. The Holland House was destroyed by fire Christmas eve, 1896. The records of the old Hotel Company are said to be in the vault of the Winnebago National Bank.

The telegraph line was completed to Rockford in October, 1855. It was owned by the Chicago & Mississippi Company. The line connected at Freeport with the line on the Illinois Central.

At the presidential election in November, 1856, Winnebago county gave John C. Fremont a magnificent vote. Every town in the county was carried for the Pathfinder. The total vote of the county was 4,154. The county gave a majority of 3,179 for Fremont over Buchanan. The First Congressional district gave majorities for Fremont and Washburne of more than twelve thousand. William Lathrop was elected representative; Samuel I. Church, sheriff; H. T. Mesler, coroner; Morris B. Derrick, circuit clerk. Mr. Church was brother of Judge Church, and came to Rockford in 1848. He purchased a quarter of the school section; later he made it his home, where he died in 1886.

In 1856 a military company was organized, under the name of the Rockford City Greys, which enkindled the enthusiasm of a large number of the young men of the city. In the summer of 1858 Colonel E. E. Ellsworth was engaged as drillmaster, and under his instruction the company attained a high degree of proficiency. In September, 1858, an encampment was held on the fair grounds, which continued four days. Companies from Freeport, Elgin and Chicago were in attendance. This company continued in excellent condition until the outbreak of the civil war, when, under the name of Rockford Zouaves, many of the company volunteered in the three months' service, under the call of the president for seventy-five thousand men; and as part of the Eleventh Illinois volunteers, were detailed to garrison duty at Cairo and at Bird's Point.

Colonel Ellsworth was a splendid specimen of young manhood. He was received as a social lion by the young people of the city. He was frequently a guest at the home of Charles H. Spafford, and at the time of his death he was betrothed to his elder daughter, now Mrs. Carrie S. Brett. In 1860 Colonel Ellsworth organized a company of Zouaves in Chicago, and the following year he accompanied President Lincoln to Washington. Upon seeing a confederate flag floating from a hotel

in Alexandria, Virginia, he rushed to the roof and tore it down. On his return from the roof he was met and shot dead by Jackson, the owner, who in turn was shot by one of Ellsworth's men, Frank E. Brownell. Colonel Ellsworth's blood was the first shed in the civil conflict.

August 17, 1858, the completion of the Atlantic cable was celebrated by the citizens of Rockford with great demonstrations of enthusiasm. On that day the queen of England and the president of the United States exchanged messages. The event was celebrated in Rockford by a salute of fifty guns, fired by the City Greys, and the church bells were rung. Public exercises were held in the evening at the court house. Addresses were made by James L. Loop, Judge Miller, E. W. Blaisdell, Judge Church, William Hulin, and Dr. Lyman. The speech of Mr. Loop was exceptionally brilliant, and replete with noble thought. One paragraph from this address is quoted: "Great Britain and the United States—the two great maritime nations of the globe, have met in mortal combat upon that briny deep; they have fought for the sea's supremacy, they have maintained on either side with all their prowess and power their respective country's glory, and well and gloriously have their names resounded through the world—but no victory ever won by either upon the ocean can compare with this joint victory we have met to celebrate."

October 27, 1858, Salmon P. Chase addressed the citizens of Rockford, on the political issues of the day, in Metropolitan Hall.

In 1860 the census of the city of Rockford, taken by Thos. Boyd, showed a population of 7,046, and 8,117 in the township. In 1836 there were 350 white inhabitants in the county, which included Boone, and the eastern half of Stephenson. In June, 1837, after Winnebago had been reduced to its present size, the county had a population of 1,086. In 1839 the village of Rockford had 235 inhabitants, and in December, 1845, there were 1,278. In 1840 there were 2,563 in Rockford township, and in 1855 there were 6,620.

## CHAPTER LXXI.

### FATALITY AT A CHARIVARI.—TRIAL OF GOVERNOR BEBB.—NOTES.

ON Tuesday evening, May 19, 1857, a charivari resulted in the instant death of one of the party. Hon. William Bebb, ex-governor of Ohio, was residing in Seward township. His son, M. S. Bebb, had just returned from the east with his bride. Twelve young men of the neighborhood proposed to charivari the bridal party. They assembled at the Governor's house about eleven o'clock at night, and began their performance with cow-bells, tin-pans, three guns, and other articles which could contribute to the hideous din. The Governor at length appeared with a shot-gun and ordered them to retire. They paid no heed, and Mr. Bebb fired one barrel, which took effect in the face of William Hogan. The party then approached nearer the house, as for an assault, when the Governor discharged the second barrel at the leader, Lemuel Clemens, and instantly killed him. The crowd then speedily dispersed.

The trial of Governor Bebb, for manslaughter, began February 4, 1858, in the circuit court, Judge Sheldon presiding. The prosecution was conducted by U. D. Meacham, the state's attorney, who was assisted by T. J. Turner. The counsel for the defense was the famous Tom Corwin, of Ohio, assisted by Judge William Johnson, James L. Loop, and Judge Anson S. Miller. The trial began in the court house, and in order to secure more room, an adjournment was taken to Metropolitan Hall.

The greatest interest was manifested in the trial, by reason of the reputation of the defendant, and the celebrity of Mr. Corwin. A large number of ladies were daily in attendance. The jury consisted of the following named gentlemen: John Spafford, Putnam Perley, William A. Phelps, Joel W. Thompson, Horace Hitchcock, L. D. Waldo, Baltus Heagle, Benjamin F. Long, John Morse, S. M. Preston, R. K. Town, Isaac Manes.

Both sides of the case were argued with great ability. The central figure was, of course, Mr. Corwin. The *Register*, in reporting his address to the jury, said: "It was just such a



speech as Tom Corwin alone can make, and was listened to with breathless attention. It lasted some four hours, during which time he went over every particular of the case, applying the law to each point, and showing under what circumstances a man may kill another, and also detailing in great beauty of language the manner in which the people had become possessed of the inalienable right to enjoy their homes in peace, and undisturbed."

The case was given to the jury at five o'clock Monday afternoon, and at nine o'clock they returned with a verdict of not guilty. The *Register* concluded quite a full report of the trial with a commendation of the jury for their righteous decision.

M. S. Bebb, whose marriage was the occasion of this disturbance, became a well-known citizen of Rockford. He had quite an extended reputation in the scientific world, and was recognized as the highest authority upon some species of the willow. Mr. Bebb was for some years a member of the public library board.

Last June the Chicago *Tribune* published an interview with Hon. Luther Laffin Mills, who made some extraordinary statements concerning Mr. Corwin's method of conducting the case. It was stated that he came to Rockford weeks in advance of the trial, made the personal acquaintance of all the farmers and their wives, and so completely impressed his strong personality upon the people that the acquittal of his client followed as a matter of course. This interview was republished in a Rockford paper, but it is declared by old residents to be a very pretty piece of legal fiction.

The Commercial Block, now known as the Chick House, was built in 1857, by T. D. Robertson, C. H. Spafford and R. P. Lane. The block was sixty-six feet front by one hundred and two in depth, with basement under the whole. The first story was divided into three stores, fronting on Main street, and two offices or shops on Elm street.

The *Register* of January 31, 1857, estimates that the grand total for improvements during 1856 was \$529,350. Among these was the Metropolitan Hall block, built by Charles and John Spafford and John Hall, at a cost of \$16,000. During this year Thomas Boyd built the four-story, marble-front block on West State street, now known as the European Hotel. Its cost was estimated in the trade review at \$10,000.

## CHAPTER LXXII.

### THE LINCOLN-DOUGLAS DEBATE.

THE famous Lincoln-Douglas debate was an event of local interest as well as national significance. In April, 1858, the Illinois state Democratic convention endorsed Stephen A. Douglas for the United States senate. Abraham Lincoln was nominated by the Republican party at Springfield, June 17th. July 24th Mr. Lincoln sent a challenge to Judge Douglas to discuss the political issues of the day in a series of joint debates. The latter accepted the challenge, and named one city in each congressional district, except the second and sixth, where they had already spoken. Ottawa, Freeport, Galesburg, Quincy, Alton, Jonesboro and Charleston were the points chosen for these discussions.

The second and most famous debate was held at Freeport, August 27th. It was the greatest political event ever held in this congressional district. Thousands were in attendance from the northern counties, and the excitement was intense. A special train was made up at Marengo, and run over the Galena & Chicago Union road. It consisted of eighteen coaches, eight of which were filled with Rockford citizens.

Mr. Lincoln's doctrine was that the government could not endure permanently divided into free and slave states; that they must all become free, or all become slave. In Mr. Lincoln's opinion, the principal point of debate was Judge Douglas' doctrine of popular sovereignty, in connection with the Dred Scott decision. These two positions, in his judgment, were in direct antagonism, and were, in reality, a shameful fraud.

It was at this debate that Mr. Lincoln propounded the four celebrated questions to Judge Douglas, the answers to which swept away his last chance for securing the presidency in 1860. Previous to the debate, a conference was held at the Brewster House, at which E. B. Washburne and Joseph Medill urged Mr. Lincoln to refrain from such interrogations. But Lincoln was insistent. He said that if Judge Douglas answered them one

way he would lose his prestige with the south; and if he answered them the other way, he could not retain the leadership of the northern wing of his party.

The result justified Mr. Lincoln's prophecy. "Of that answer at Freeport," as Mr. Herndon puts it, Douglas "instantly died. The red-gleaming southern tomahawk flashed high and keen. Douglas was removed out of Lincoln's way. The wind was taken out of Seward's sails (by the house-divided speech), and Lincoln stood out prominent."

The election occurred on the 2d of November. Mr. Lincoln received a majority of over four thousand of the popular vote, yet the returns from the legislative districts foreshadowed his defeat. At the senatorial election in the legislature, Judge Douglas received fifty-four votes, and Mr. Lincoln forty-six—one of the results of the unfair apportionment law then in operation.

Robert R. Hitt, the able representative of this district in congress, was the official stenographer of these debates. These famous addresses, which made Mr. Lincoln's national reputation, and which, more than anything else, contributed to his election as president, owe their permanent form to Mr. Hitt's stenographic notes, the originals of which Mr. Hitt still hoards among his literary treasures. They were published in full by a publishing house in Cincinnati, in 1860.

Mr. Hitt relates the way in which the *Chicago Tribune* failed to print a line of Lincoln's historic speech at Freeport in the Douglas debate—the greatest of all Lincoln's addresses before the civil war. Mr. Hitt was reporting the speech, and was writing out his notes for the next morning's paper, when Owen Lovejoy, the abolition agitator, arose in the rear of the hall and delivered a harangue, which is now forgotten, but which, for the moment, roused the meeting to a frenzy of enthusiasm, while Lincoln's had seemed rather tame. Joseph Medill, the proprietor of the *Tribune*, was carried away with Lovejoy's speech, and came up to Mr. Hitt's desk excitedly, ordered him to stop transcribing his notes of Lincoln's speech, and to let the *Tribune* have every word of Lovejoy's harangue in the morning. The *Tribune* next morning was all Lovejoy, and there was only a word about Lincoln's oration. This is "an illustration," says Hitt, in telling the story, "of the fact that the contemporaneous impression of a great occasion does not always coincide with the judgment of history."



## CHAPTER LXXIII.

### ROCKFORD SETTLERS 1855-59.

CHARLES WILLIAMS was a native of Massachusetts. He came to Rockford in 1855, and with his son Lewis, was engaged in the hardware business. Mr. Williams was the war mayor of Rockford, serving from 1859 to 1864. His home was the residence now owned by John Barnes. Mr. Williams died in 1876. He was father of Miss Elizabeth Williams and the late Mrs. C. L. Williams.

William M. Rowland came to Rockford in 1855. He was a native of Connecticut, and when a young man he removed to Augusta, Georgia, where he was interested in the Iron Steamboat Company. Soon after the repeal of the Missouri compromise, Hon. Alexander H. Stephens, member of congress, informally received the prominent citizens of Augusta. Mr. Rowland is said to have been the only gentleman present who did not offer congratulations to Mr. Stephens upon the repeal of that law, but assured him that it would prove a calamity to the south. Mrs. Rowland was a daughter of Rev. Henry Wight, D. D., a graduate of Harvard, and for forty years pastor of a Congregational church at Bristol, Rhode Island. Mr. Rowland died April 29, 1869. William L. and Robert C. Rowland are sons.

William L. Rowland was graduated from Yale college in the class of 1852, and removed to Rockford with his father's family in 1855. When the public library was founded in 1872, Mr. Rowland was appointed librarian, and he has continuously retained this position. Under his able and conscientious supervision, the library has grown from an exceedingly humble beginning to an institution worthy of a much larger city. The Rockford public library is universally conceded to be unsurpassed by any other library in the country of its size, for the use of the student and specialist. The library will be Mr. Rowland's monument. An uncle of Mr. Rowland, Rev. John B. Wight, a Unitarian clergyman, was the author of the first public library law of Massachusetts, enacted in 1851. Mr. Wight was sent to the legislature from Wayland for the express purpose of securing the passage of this law.

Benjamin Blakeman was a native of Stratford, Connecticut. He came to Rockford in 1856, and carried on the lumber business, first on South Court, and later on South Main street. About 1871 he formed a partnership with William Dobson, in manufacturing. Mr. Blakeman is now retired from business. His daughters are Mrs. Theron Pierpont, Mrs. Anna C. Vincent, Miss Harriett, and Mrs. A. D. Early, deceased.

Colonel Garrett Nevius, a native of New York, came to Rockford in 1858. He was a member of the Rockford City Greys, and in 1861 he enlisted with the Eleventh Illinois Volunteers, and arose to the rank of colonel. He was killed in the charge of Ransom's brigade on the enemy's works at Vicksburg, May 22, 1863. Memorial services were held on the court house square, in Rockford, where the remains lay in state, and an address was delivered by Dr. Kerr. His body was then sent to New York for burial. Colonel Nevius was only twenty-six years of age. Nevius Post, G. A. R., was named in his honor.

Robert H. Tinker was born at Honolulu, Sandwich Islands, in 1837, where his father, Rev. Reuben Tinker, was a missionary, sent out by the Presbyterian church. Mr. Tinker came to Rockford in 1856. He built the Swiss cottage, on Kent's creek, the most picturesque home in the city. The plan of his unique library, on two floors, with winding stairway, was suggested to Mr. Tinker by his visit to Sir Walter Scott's library, nearly forty years ago. In 1870 Mr. Tinker married the widow of John H. Manny. He was elected Mayor of Rockford in 1875, and served one term. Mr. Tinker has been interested in various manufacturing enterprises.

John H. Hall came to Rockford in 1855, and engaged in the grocery trade. He served the city as alderman, and as a member of the school board. The Hall school is named in his honor. Mr. Hall was father of Mrs. H. N. Baker, and Henry and Miss Helen Hall. His death occurred in 1882.

Lucius M. West was born at Vernon Center, New York, June 19, 1820. He was united in marriage to Miss Sarah A. Sturtevant, of his native county. In 1858 Mr. and Mrs. West and their three sons came to Rockford. In 1862 Mr. West built the store now occupied by M. M. Carpenter, where he carried on trade in rubber goods and boots and shoes. About 1874 he engaged in the manufacture and jobbing of enamel carriage top dressing, which has attained a world-wide reputation. Mr. West was actively identified with the religious interests of the city.

In 1875 he appointed a religious service for Woodruff's Addition, and for three years and a half conducted a mission school there, and furnished the building at his own expense. Deacon West was benevolent, and freely gave of his means to relieve the sick and needy. He died August 20, 1893.

Charles L. Williams was born in Sherburne, Chenango county, New York, October 20, 1828. He was graduated from Hamilton college in 1847, and in 1851 he received the degree of M. A. from his alma mater. Mr. Williams came to Rockford in 1859, and engaged in mercantile business. He married a daughter of Mayor Charles Williams and subsequently purchased his father-in-law's house on North Main street, which included the lots now belonging to John Barnes and Mrs. Julia P. Warren. Mr. Williams took an active interest in organizing the public library, and from 1872 to 1878 he was a member of the board of directors. Mr. Williams has four children: Mrs. C. R. Smith, of Chicago; Mrs. W. D. Williams, of Omaha; Miss Sarah, and Lewis A. Williams.

Daniel N. Hood was born in Salem, Massachusetts, September 25, 1834, and came to Rockford in 1858. Prof. Hood was for many years at the head of the musical department of Rockford seminary, and for more than ten years of this period he was organist of the Second Presbyterian church in Chicago. Prof. Hood now resides in Boston. He is father of Mrs. Frank D. Emerson.

Gilbert Woodruff was born near Watertown, New York, November 20, 1817. He came to Rockford in 1857, and soon after he purchased and platted a farm which is now known as Woodruff's Addition. Easy terms of payment were given purchasers of lots. Mr. Woodruff is therefore in a real sense one of the builders of Rockford. He has been president of the Rockford National Bank since its organization; president of the Forest City Insurance Company since its organization in 1873; and president of the Forest City Furniture factory since 1875. In 1842 Mr. Woodruff was united in marriage to Miss Nancy Fay. They had five children: Mrs. Sarah Parmele, Volney D., Mrs. Emma Ferguson, William F., and Mrs. R. W. Emerson. Mrs. Woodruff died in 1877. In 1879 Mr. Woodruff married Mrs. Augusta Todd. Mr. Woodruff was mayor of Rockford from 1873 to 1875.

Horace W. Taylor was born in Granby, Massachusetts, February 1, 1823. He was graduated from Amherst in



1848. In 1857 he came to Rockford and was admitted to the bar in the autumn of the same year. For forty years Mr. Taylor was a well-known member of the legal profession of this city. In 1866 he began his work as master-in-chancery under appointment of Judge Sheldon. This position he held until his death, except an interim from 1872 to 1876. Mr. Taylor was elected a member of the legislature in 1878, and served one term. His death occurred at a sanitarium at Kenosha, August 29, 1898. His immediate surviving family are: Mrs. Taylor, and two daughters, Mrs. J. R. Crocker, of Chicago, and Miss Ama. Mr. Taylor was the first president of the New England Society of Rockford.

Marquis L. Gorham was a native of Vermont, and came to Rockford in 1857. He obtained a patent for a seeder manufactured by Clark & Utter, and for a corn cultivator made by N. C. Thompson. He was also the inventor of the first twine binder, the patent for which was sold to C. H. McCormick. Mr. Gorham died at Philadelphia in 1876, while attending the centennial exposition, when he was only about forty-five years of age. His daughter, Mrs. Alice Harrison, died in 1882, and the last surviving child, Mrs. Lillian Harrison, died in 1890.

Norman Cornelius Thompson was born in Knoxville, Georgia, May 25, 1828. Mr. Thompson entered Yale college, and during his junior year his father's home and store were destroyed by fire. This misfortune changed his course in life. Mr. Thompson came to Rockford in 1857. He built one of the largest manufacturing plants on the water-power, and his immense output contributed in no small degree to the prestige of Rockford as a manufacturing city. Mr. Thompson was a public-spirited citizen, and a generous supporter of the First Presbyterian church. Financial reverses overtook him in 1884, which resulted in the suspension of his bank in East Rockford, and his retirement from his manufacturing industry. Mr. Thompson died July 4, 1898. N. F. Thompson, of the Manufacturers National Bank, is a son, and Miss Norma C. Thompson is a daughter.

Thomas Butterworth was born in Manchester, England, September 6, 1827. He learned brick-laying in his native country. In his twentieth year he came to America, and landed at New Orleans. On account of yellow fever, he immediately went to Cincinnati. He entered the employ of Stacy & Company, the proprietors of the Cincinnati gas works, and in their interest

he was sent to repair the works in Rockford about 1856. The latter plant was then owned by Lane, Sanford & Co. He remained in Rockford and assumed the management of the works. He also continued the business of contractor, and built Brown's Hall, the old People's Bank building on State street, and other buildings. He subsequently sold his contracting business, and in time became the sole owner of the gas plant. In 1878 Mr. Butterworth was elected a member of the legislature, as a Democrat, and served one term. His death occurred at Ashville, North Carolina, April 5, 1885. His surviving family were Mrs. Butterworth, and seven children: Mrs. Will Tullock, Mrs. E. M. Botsford, Mrs. Paul F. Schuster, Mrs. Hosmer Porter, Mrs. Geo. Roper, and Chester and William Butterworth.

William H. Townsend came to Rockford in 1857, from Springfield, Pennsylvania. He was in affluent circumstances. His home was on South Third street, well known in later years as the residence of Dr. D. S. Clark. Mr. Townsend was a stockholder and director of the Rock River Mutual Fire Insurance Company, and the later reverses of the company were a source of such anxiety to him that he became deranged. June 2, 1869, his body was found in Rock river, about four and a half miles south of the city. Mr. Townsend was about sixty years of age, and had been a member of the board of education. He was held in high esteem, and his death was a great shock to the community. Mr. Townsend was father of Mrs. D. S. Clark.

F. H. Manny came to Rockford in 1859. He was a cousin of John P. and John H. Manny. For some years he was engaged in manufacturing on the water-power. His home was the residence owned later by W. F. Hudler, on the South side. He met with reverses in 1875, went to Waukegan, and from there to Chicago. Mr. Manny died in Chicago April 15, 1899, at the age of eighty-two years. The remains were brought to Rockford for interment. He had one son, James, who so far as known by his friends, is no longer living, and three daughters, the first and second Mrs. Farrington, and Miss Harriett.

Among other well-known citizens who came to Rockford during the period covered by this chapter are the following: George Trufant, George H. Dennett, Wm. McKinley, 1855; A. C. Burpee, 1856; David Keyt, S. F. Penfield, D. S. Hough, H. B. Hale, W. H. Smith, C. A. Shaw, 1857; John R. Porter, 1859.

Other citizens engaged in active business during the fifties were: L. H. Todd, dealer in boots and shoes; Thomas Ennett,



contractor; D. Miller, boots and shoes; J. W. Seccomb, books; C. T. Saekett, painter; W. G. Johnson, painter; Robert Smith, hatter; J. B. Agard, grain buyer; Joseph Burns, dry goods; Wm. Lyman, physician; John Fraley, druggist; Israel Sovereign, hardware dealer. James B. Skinner, who conducted a blacksmith shop on North Main street, became the founder of the manufacturing firm of Skinner, Briggs & Enoch. He was father of Mrs. C. F. Henry and Mrs. A. C. Gray.

Several early settlers should have been mentioned in their proper chronological order. Among these were the Talcott family. The first permanent white settlers of Rockton, with the exception of Stephen Mack, were William Talcott and his son, Thomas B. They came from Rome, New York, with horse and wagon, in 1835. The father removed his family to Rockton in 1837. Wait, Sylvester and Henry Talcott were younger sons. William Talcott held a captain's commission in a company of New York state militia during the second war with England. His death occurred September 2, 1864. Thomas B. was one of the first three county commissioners elected in 1836. He died at Rockton October 1, 1894. The Talcott family were the first proprietors of the northern village. Samuel Talcott settled there in 1843.

Levi Rhoades was born at Hinsdale, New York, June 25, 1830. In 1847 he came to Rockford. He learned the cooper's trade, and during the war he laid the foundation of a large estate in supplying the demand for barrels. He continued in this business until 1884. Mr. Rhoades was interested in many manufacturing enterprises, and was a man of great force and executive ability. He was elected mayor of Rockford in 1876, and served one year. His death occurred November 19, 1891.

W. D. Trahern was born in Loudon county, Virginia, March 24, 1824. In 1848 he came to Rockford, and the following year he began the manufacture of threshing-machines. In 1862 Mr. Trahern engaged in the manufacture of iron pumps. Mr. Trahern was successful in business, a considerate employer, and was highly esteemed. He died November 2, 1883. O. P. Trahern is a son.



## CHAPTER LXXIV.

### ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY 1850-60.

**D**URING the pastorate of Rev. F. A. Reed, the congregation of the First Methodist church became so large that he suggested the formation of another church on the West side. In 1851 the Methodists living on the West side held their Sunday and Thursday evening prayer-meetings at the home of the leader, James B. Skinner, on North Main street. The organization of what is now the Court Street Methodist church was completed January 1, 1852, in the First church. The charter members, as nearly as can be ascertained, were as follows: James B. Skinner, Charlotte L. Skinner, William Hazard, Louisa Hazard, Elizabeth Keyes, Rev. Wm. Fowler, Mrs. Elizabeth Fowler, Daniel Ticknor, Thomas Peters, Ann Peters, Clark Fisher, Francis Richards, Lucy Richards, James Preston, Ann Preston, Jonathan Hitchcock, Mrs. J. Hitchcock, Asael Ives, Mary Ives, Dr. Charles N. Andrews, Mary Dewey, Joanna Davis, George Boyd, Alzira Andrus, George Reeves, Elizabeth Reeves, G. W. Reeves, W. J. Cole, Mary Cole, William Hamley, John Travis, Mrs. Travis, John Austin, Mrs. Austin.

The following board of trustees was elected: William J. Cole, James Taylor, Charles N. Andrews, Jonathan Hitchcock, and James B. Skinner. In 1852 the Dorcas Society was organized. January 14, 1853, a lot was purchased on North Court street, and the erection of a church was soon begun, with John Austin, architect; Jonathan Hitchcock, mason; and W. J. Cole, carpenter. During the erection of the church, the congregation worshiped in Boyd's Hall. Rev. Luke Hitchcock was presiding elder.

The conference of 1853 sent Rev. Chatfield, who remained a part of the year, and then returned to Michigan. Rev. William Tasker, pastor of the First church, assumed oversight of the church until the next conference. In September, 1854, Rev. W. F. Stewart was appointed pastor. The dedication of the new church occurred in November, 1854, conducted by Revs. Hooper Crews, Bolles, Stuff, and Agard. The cost of the building and

grounds was seven thousand dollars. A revival followed the opening of the new church, and during that conference year one hundred and forty persons were added to their numbers.

In 1864 Court Street church was set off in the Mt. Morris district, and William T. Harlow was appointed presiding elder. This division of territory was unsatisfactory, and in 1865 this charge was returned to the Rockford district, where it belonged, and where it has since remained. August 26, 1857, the conference met with this church. This conference was signalized by the passage of stringent anti-slavery resolutions, and in "breaking ground" for the Wesleyan seminary, to which reference was made in a preceding chapter. The first pastors served in the following order: 1853-54, Rev. Chatfield; 1854-55, Rev. W. F. Stewart; 1856-58, Rev. Luman A. Sanford; 1858-60, William P. Gray; 1860-61, Revs. James R. Goodrich, William E. Daniels, T. B. Taylor. Rev. J. H. Vincent, founder of the Chautauqua movement, and now a bishop of the church, was pastor from 1861 to 1864. During his absence on a trip to Europe, the pulpit was supplied by Rev. Daniel P. Kidder, D. D.

Information concerning the early history of St. James' Roman Catholic church is very meager. The records are said to have been destroyed in the Chicago fire of 1871. Mass was celebrated in the homes of Catholic settlers of Rockford by priests located at New Dublin and Freeport, previous to 1850. Father Gueguen said mass and baptized children in 1840. The permanent organization dates from 1850. John McAnarney is said to be the oldest resident Catholic in the city. In 1851 Artemas Hitchcock and wife conveyed to Rt. Rev. James Oliver Van de Velde, for one hundred and fifty dollars, lot one in block twenty-six, as found in Duncan Ferguson's map of the village. A second conveyance was from John Lee and wife to Anthony Regan, bishop of Chicago, of lot two in the same block, for four hundred dollars. Father Hampston was appointed priest of the parish in 1851 by Bishop Van de Velde. He was the first resident pastor, and built the first church in 1852. It was a small, one-story frame structure, with a seating capacity for two hundred people. The citizens of the town contributed a portion of the money with which the church was erected. Father Hampston died while in charge of the parish, and is buried under the present church. He was a man of studious habits, modest and retiring in manner, and highly respected by the citizens,

The present St. James' church was begun in 1866, and dedicated the following year, under the pastorate of Rev. J. S. O'Neill. The pastors of St. James' church have been as follows: Revs. John Hampston, George Hamilton, William Lambert, J. Bulger, John P. Donelan, J. S. O'Neill, Joseph McMahon, T. J. Butler, James J. Flaherty. The only surviving pastors are Fathers McMahon and Flaherty. The latter started the parochial school in 1886, and in 1891 completed the present brick structure. The school is in charge of the Dominican Sisters.

Dean Butler was a priest of more than local reputation. He was born in Limerick, Ireland. He completed his education in the College of the Propaganda, in Rome. He possessed unusual musical ability; and while in Rome was a member of the pope's choir. It is said Dean Butler was the papal ambassador at the baptism of the Prince Imperial, son of Napoleon III. and Eugenie. During the civil war, Dean Butler was chaplain of the Irish Brigade. He was a man of literary tastes, and for some years was a member of the Rockford public library board. Dean Butler died at Rome in July, 1897.

The formal organization of Presbyterianism in Rockford occurred in 1854. There were Presbyterians, however, in the city before that time. These naturally affiliated with the Congregational churches, and were not an unimportant element in their strength. The building begun as a Congregational church on North First street, and afterward abandoned, was often called the Presbyterian church. It was really the joint effort of Congregationalists and Presbyterians. The Presbyterian clergy of this country have been distinguished for piety and culture, and the church has been a stalwart champion of the fundamental Christian doctrines. The writer is indebted for the facts given herewith to historical addresses delivered by Rev. James Cruickshanks and Rev. J. K. Fowler.

Early in 1853 a few devout adherents of this faith lay the foundations of a Presbyterian church in Rockford. The first meeting was held in the summer in the old court house (the abandoned Congregational church) on the east side of the river. Rev. R. G. Thompson, of Beloit, preached the first sermon to a congregation of twelve persons. Services were subsequently conducted at intervals by members of the Chicago presbytery, until the arrival in December of Rev. Hugh A. Brown. In November, 1853, these services were held in Peake's Hall and



in the court house. In December services were regularly held twice each sabbath; first in Horsman's Hall, and later in Warner's hall, over C. F. Henry's clothing store. February 1, 1854, the little band resumed worship in the court house, where, July 8th of the same year the formal organization of the First Presbyterian church of Rockford was duly effected, with thirty-eight members. Rev. G. F. Goodhue, of Marengo, presided.

The original members of this church were as follows: William Johnson, Christina Johnson, Margaret Johnson, Deborah Burns, Charles M. Priestly, James Forbes, Esther Armstrong, Isabella Marshall, Elizabeth Clow, William McCall, James Nesbit, John Bull, Rebecca Kozier, Thomas Meredith, Grace Hinch, John Martin, A. Ferguson, Mary Parland, Janet Shepherd, Mary Johnson, Archibald Johnson, Michael Burns, Shepley Priestly, Fanny Moore, Petrina Forbes, Peter R. Marshall, Robert Clow, Sarah Forbes, Jane Blaine, Anna Nesbit, Sarah Bull, David Meredith, Nancy Meredith, Elizabeth Linn, Mary Martin, Mrs. A. Ferguson, William Shepherd, and John Tullock. William Johnson, Michael Burns, Thomas Meredith and Shepley Priestly were chosen to the eldership, and Robert Clow and William McCall were elected deacons, who were ordained and installed in their respective offices on the following day. A choir was employed September 17th to lead in the service of song, and November, 1855, the choir, by a resolution passed in the session, was allowed the use of an instrument for use in public worship. In October, 1855, H. C. Meslor and William Shepherd were elected and installed as ruling elders.

December 3, 1855, the clerk of the session was instructed to apply to the board of domestic missions for an appropriation of three hundred dollars to aid in the support of Rev. Hugh A. Brown, as the stated supply of the church. February 10, 1857, Rev. Moses Ordway, of the presbytery of Chicago, was requested to be present at a meeting to make choice of a pastor. Rev. Hugh A. Brown was chosen. He declined the call, though he continued to supply the pulpit until January 1, 1858, when Rev. John M. Faris, of the Richland presbytery, synod of Ohio, was unanimously chosen pastor.

The first report to the presbytery in 1855 shows that the membership had increased to fifty-five, the families to thirty-eight, and the congregational expenses to six hundred and twenty-five dollars. Rev. Faris' pastorate continued four years and a half, until October, 1862, when failing health made his

resignation necessary. His pastorate was successful. The communicants increased the first year from seventy-seven to ninety-seven, and the congregational expenses from seven hundred to thirteen hundred dollars.

Rev. Faris' successors have been Revs. Faunt Leroy Senour, J. S. Grimes, A. J. Leyenberger (now shortened to Berger), James Cruickshanks, J. K. Fowler, J. R. Sutherland, George Harkness, B. E. S. Ely.

In September following the organization the congregation worshiped in the old Unitarian church, on the northeast corner of Elm and Church streets. Services were held in the old court house from November, 1854, until March 1, 1855, when the old Unitarian church was purchased. The society used it for a time on the old site, and then removed it to the northeast corner of State and Winnebago streets, where the church continued to worship until December 20, 1868, when they took possession of their present house of worship.

The sabbath-school antedates the church six months. It was organized the last Wednesday in December, 1853, with fifteen pupils, promptly after a stated supply had reached the field. Mr. Brown may have directed the school for a time, but Michael Burns was the first superintendent.

The First Swedish Lutheran church was organized January 15, 1854, with seventy-seven communicants and thirty-two children. Late in the summer of 1855 it was decided to build a church. The original estimate of cost was seven hundred and seventy-five dollars. Its actual cost, however, was sixteen hundred dollars. This church was erected on the corner of North First street and what is now Lafayette avenue. It was a frame structure, forty-five by thirty-eight feet, and twenty-eight feet high. It had a seating capacity for three hundred persons. The dedication occurred November 23, 1856. Dr. Hasselquist preached the dedicatory sermon. This building is still standing, and forms a part of J. Friedman's double house on North First street.

The first pastor was Rev. A. Andren, who was called in the spring of 1856, and entered upon his duties in August of the same year. Rev. Andren built a parsonage on the church lot at his own expense, with the understanding that at the termination of his pastorate the church should buy the building at its original cost. Rev. Andren's pastorate continued until the



close of 1860, when he removed to Attica, Indiana. In May, 1860, the church decided to withdraw from the synod of Northern Illinois, and join the Augustana synod. At that time the church had one hundred and fifteen communicants.

The present church was built in 1883, at a cost of about sixty thousand dollars. It is the largest auditorium in the city, with a seating capacity for eighteen hundred. Its membership is fifteen hundred, with eight hundred children. This is the largest membership of any Swedish Lutheran church in America.

The Christian church was organized March 18, 1856, with twenty-five members. They first held meetings in the old court house. The first records are meagre. A edifice was completed in 1856. It stood on the site of the Trinity Lutheran church, and its estimated cost was \$1,748. The clergy of the Christian church discarded the prefix Reverend. The first elder was Issac Shaver, who served one year. He was succeeded by L. J. Correll, who remained two years. Lorenzo D. Waldo, who came to Rockford in 1845, was for thirty-two years an elder of this church, and an honored and faithful minister of the gospel. Mr. Waldo died July 12, 1888. He was father of Billings R., Henry D., and Misses Jennie, Mabel and Ada Waldo.

The Westminster Presbyterian church was organized January 3, 1856, with twenty-two members. Many of these had taken letters from the First Congregational church. A fraternal feeling prevailed at the time of separation, but there was a conviction among those who were distinctively Presbyterian that there was an opportunity for a society of that faith. The organization of the church occurred in the old Congregational church. It was first called the Second Presbyterian church, and the name was subsequently changed to Westminster.

The constituent members were as follows: Thomas Garrison, Mrs. Electa Garrison, Ralph Giddings, Mrs. Cornelia Giddings, Joel B. Potter, Mrs. Adaline B. Potter, E. S. Rose, Mrs. Jerusha C. Rose, Eliza W. Rose (now Mrs. E. T. Cleveland), Charles Williams, Mrs. Sarah S. Williams, Frederick A. Hart, Mrs. Sylvia Hart, Eusebia More, Eliza White, Stephen Rose, Mrs. Amanda H. Rose, Frances Rose, Stephen Rose, Jr., J. H. Wheat, Mrs. Frances E. Wheat, Juliet F. Wheat. Three of this number are still residing in Rockford: Mrs. Adaline Potter, Mrs. E. T. Cleveland (formerly Miss Eliza M. Rose), and Mrs. Frances E. Wheat. Joel B. Potter, Charles Williams, J. H. Wheat and



J. S. Rose constituted the first board of elders. The first deacons were Stephen Rose and Ralph Giddings. Rev. Morrison Huggins was the first pastor, who served until 1859. He literally gave his life for his people, and died during his pastorate. As he consciously drew near the end, he said: "A pastor's death-bed is his people's."

The first place of worship was the historic court house on North First street. In the summer of 1856 a chapel was completed on the ground now occupied by the lecture room of the church. This chapel soon proved too small, and public worship was conducted in Metropolitan Hall, pending the erection of the present church, which was dedicated in 1858.

The following have served the church as pastors or stated supplies: Revs. Morrison Huggins, L. H. Johnson, Charles Mattoon, Charles A. Williams, W. S. Curtis, J. H. Ritchie, T. S. Scott, S. L. Conde, W. M. Campbell, W. T. Wilcox.

The Winnebago Street church had its origin in a Sunday-school, which was started May 20, 1856, and which held its sessions in a grove on the river bank. From the grove, in October, the school went, by invitation of the directors, into the new Kent schoolhouse. The Sunday-school continued to grow until a church became a necessity. The sabbath-school was under the supervision of the Court Street church. The church was organized March 4, 1864, at the home of Israel Sovereign. The presiding elder, Richard A. Blanchard, acted as chairman. The roll of members numbered twenty-eight. The following board of trustees was elected: Israel Sovereign, Fred. A. Arnold, Josephus Lakin, Benjamin F. Whittle, and Stephen Thayer. Ground was broken for the new church August 8, 1864. The corner-stone was laid August 24th. The address was made by Rev. Thomas M. Eddy. The cost of the church was eight thousand dollars, and was dedicated February 12, 1865, by Dr. Eddy. The parsonage was built in 1867, at a cost of twelve hundred and fifty dollars. Rev. Robert Bentley served as pastor from 1864 to 1866; Rev. William D. Skelton from 1866 to 1869; Henry L. Martin, 1869 to 1871.

One of the results of the religious revival of 1858 was the formation of the Young Men's Christian Association. The first meeting preliminary to organization was held May 4, 1858, at the First Presbyterian church. A motion prevailed that an Association be formed, and an adjournment was taken to

Tuesday evening, May 11th. The next meeting, however, was not held until the 18th, when the constitution was signed by sixty persons, all of whom were members of the various evangelical churches of the city. May 25th, the Association met at the Baptist church. Rev. Hooper Crews delivered the inaugural address, and the constitution was signed by forty-five persons. On the following Tuesday evening, June 1st, the Association elected a portion of their officers, and at their next meeting, June 8th, the organization was completed. The officers were as follows: President, Horace W. Taylor; vice-presidents, S. F. Penfield, C. E. Buswell, William Wasson, Lewis Williams, R. P. Lane, William Brown, V. Daniels; corresponding secretary, E. C. Daugherty; recording secretary, O. A. Pennoyer; treasurer, William Culver; librarian, C. E. Wingate. A standing committee and a committee on library and lectures were appointed. The lecture and library committees were requested to procure Sunday evening lectures, as often as once in each month, from the pastors of the city and others.

During this formative period several animated discussions were held concerning the eligibility of Unitarians to membership. Among the leaders of the affirmative were Rev. A. H. Conant and Melancthon Starr. The Association was prosperous for about three years. The last president was Lucius M. West. The outbreak of the civil war drew many of the young men into military service, and the Association ceased to exist about 1861. The meetings were held on the second floor of the stone building on the southeast corner of State and Wyman streets. Last year Charles L. Williams found the records of the Association among his household effects, and presented them to the present Association.

The Third Street church was the second daughter of the First church. It was organized January 9, 1858, with about eighty members, while Rev. Hooper Crews was pastor of the parent church. Messrs. Benjamin Holt, William Brown, Charles Foster, Solomon Wheeler, George Troxell, Willard Wheeler, William Worthington, Francis A. Horn and James Chick constituted the first board of trustees. Two lots were purchased on the east side of North Third street for twelve hundred dollars. The church was built by John Early in 1858 at a cost of four thousand dollars. It was dedicated by Hooper Crews, Saturday, October 9, 1858. Rev. Thomas M. Eddy, the well-known



editor and author, preached the following Sunday morning. A small parsonage was built adjoining the edifice on the north in 1859, at a cost of six hundred dollars. In 1866 the church was enlarged and improved at an outlay of eighteen hundred dollars. In 1871 the society bought a parsonage on State street, nearly opposite the Baptist church, for three thousand and nine hundred dollars. This property was subsequently owned by Henry C. Gill. In 1874 the society sold the former parsonage on Third street for thirteen hundred dollars. This church was visited by several successful revivals.

The Third Street church became strong and influential. Rev. Nathaniel P. Heath served from 1858-60; Rev. Luman A. Sanford, 1860-62. May 19, 1876, the First church and the Third Street church concluded to unite their fortunes and spend their future as one body, under the name of the Centennial church.

The State Street Baptist church was organized in 1858. During Rev. Ichabod Clark's pastorate of the First Baptist church, letters were granted to thirty-four members who wished to organize a society on the east side of the river. This purpose had its origin in the prayer-meetings held by the Baptist women in that part of the city. The first formal step toward the new church was the organization of a Sunday-school, July 4, 1858. July 13th, a prayer-meeting was held in the vestry of the Westminster Presbyterian church, at which notice was given that two weeks from that date a second meeting of those interested in the new movement would be held.

The organization of the church was formally completed in the vestry of the Presbyterian church August 17, 1858, with the following constituent members: C. E. Buswell, A. S. Buswell, Eliza Barker, Charles Barker, Sophia C. Chamberlain, Brewster H. Chamberlin, Susan Cram (Mrs. P. Mesick), Armina Cram, Ruhanna Compton, Amanda Crane, Abby M. Dennis, James T. Dunn, Jane L. Dunn, Ann A. Dunn, Thompson Dunn, Stephen Gilbert, Sarah Gilbert, Maria Gilbert, Jacob Hazlett, Jane Hazlett, Catherine Hazlett, Margaret Hazlett (Mrs. J. P. Largent), James B. Howell, Cardina M. Hathaway, H. H. Guthrie, Ellen Miles, George Mills, Susan Mills, Chichester Mills, Elizabeth M. Mills, Erastus B. Perry, E. R. Riggs, Charlotte A. Riggs, Sarah A. Stearns. Six of this number are still living in Rockford: Jacob Hazlett, Mrs. Jane Hazlett, Catherine Hazlett, Mrs. J. P. Largent, Miss Eliza Barker, and J. B. Howell.



The first board of deacons consisted of E. R. Riggs, J. T. Dunn and C. E. Buswell; Chichester Mills, clerk; R. Smith, treasurer.

The next day, Rev. Edward C. Mitchell arrived in the city. August 31st he was called to the pastorate, which he accepted September 14th. The terms were three hundred dollars in cash, an equal amount in board for himself and wife, and two hundred dollars additional if circumstances permitted. One of the first steps was the engagement of Prof. D. N. Hood to conduct the music. The church was prosperous during Dr. Mitchell's pastorate. A sociable was held in Metropolitan Hall, and plans perfected for a house of worship. A little chapel was erected on the corner of Market, State and North Fifth streets, which is still standing. This chapel was dedicated February 2, 1860. Its cost was eighteen hundred dollars. It had sittings for two hundred and fifty people. This house was built at a cost of ceaseless industry and sacrifice, and with some of the forms of special effort incident to pioneer times. For nearly nine years this chapel remained the home of the society.

The organization was first called the Second Baptist church of Rockford, but on the choice of a permanent location, the name was changed to indicate its relationship to the city, to the State Street Baptist church, October 26, 1858.

The present house of worship was dedicated November 18, 1868; the cost was more than thirty-four thousand dollars.

Dr. Mitchell's successors have been: Revs. Spencer F. Holt, Henry C. Mabie, E. K. Chandler, A. R. Medbury, C. R. Lathrop, J. T. Burhoe, R. F. Y. Pierce, Langley B. Sears, J. T. Burhoe. Rev. Burhoe's first pastorate was the longest in the history of the church. It began in September, 1883, and closed in February, 1892. His present pastorate began in November, 1898.

Dr. Mitchell, the first pastor, died in New Orleans, in February, 1900. He held positions of influence in his denomination. He was professor of Biblical literature at Shurtleff college; held the chair of Hebrew and Old Testament interpretation in the Baptist Union theological seminary; professor of Hebrew in Regent's Park college, London; president of a Baptist theological school in Paris; acting president of Roger Williams university, at Nashville, Tennessee; president of Leland university, New Orleans. He also did considerable literary work. In 1879 he revised and edited Davies' Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon; with this he issued the Principles of Hebrew Grammar. In 1880 he issued a new translation of Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar.

## CHAPTER LXXV.

### CONCLUSION.

THE presidential election of 1860 marked an epoch in American history. The nation had come to the parting of the ways. Mr. Lincoln's prophecy that the government could not permanently endure half slave and half free, was about to be demonstrated before the world. Mr. Lincoln, by reason of his profound insight into the political situation, which he had shown in his debates with Judge Douglas, was the logical candidate of his party.

The nomination of Mr. Lincoln was received with great enthusiasm by the citizens of Rockford. In August the Rockford Wide Awake Club was organized. Its object was co-operation for the success of Republican principles and the election of Mr. Lincoln.

Saturday, September 1st, was a Republican rally day. The Wide Awake Clubs from neighboring towns were present. The special attraction was Cassius M. Clay, the celebrated orator of Kentucky. The exercises were held on the court house square, and it was estimated that fully twelve thousand people were in attendance. The first speech was made by Hon. James H. Baker, secretary of state of Minnesota. Mr. Clay was introduced by Judge S. M. Church. "His oratory," said the *Register*, "is not of the fervid kind, but he is a calm, cool, deliberate speaker, laying out his ideas into square blocks of solid argument and building up an edifice supported by facts and figures which it is absolutely impossible to undermine or batter down."

During September and October, a series of joint discussions was held by Judge Allen C. Fuller, of Belvidere, and John A. Rawlins, of Galena, on the political issues of the day. One joint debate was held in each county of the First congressional district. Judge Fuller was the Republican candidate for presidential elector, and Mr. Rawlins was the candidate of the Douglas Democracy. One discussion was held in Rockford Septem-



ber 29th. These debates have a historic interest by reason of the subsequent prominence of the participants. Judge Fuller became the war adjutant of the state, and in this capacity he displayed great executive ability, and was the able supporter of Governor Yates, in the organization of the military forces of the state. Judge Fuller still resides in Belvidere. Upon the outbreak of the war in 1861, Mr. Rawlins came promptly to the support of the union cause; he was the confidential friend and adviser of General Grant during his campaigns, and in 1869 he became his secretary of war.

Among other gentlemen who made addresses in Rockford during the campaign were Judge Lyman Trumbull, Stephen A. Hurlbut, Governor Bebb, Melancthon Smith, Colonel Ellis, James L. Loop and Judge Church. Richard Yates and Owen Lovejoy made speeches at Belvidere October 9th.

The presidential election was held November 6th. Winnebago county cast 3,985 votes for Abraham Lincoln and 817 for Judge Douglas; Richard Yates received 3,986 votes for governor, and Mr. Allen 826.

The election of Mr. Lincoln was perhaps the most notable event in the life of the nation. The shouts of victory had scarcely died away when one southern state after another openly revolted from the authority of the union. The election of Mr. Lincoln brought the sword, rather than peace. But the sword was drawn in a holy cause. For two hundred and fifty years the irrepressible conflict between freedom and slavery had continued. The "land of the free" had made iniquity her law. Millions of bondsmen wet the soil with tears and blood. Cause and Effect, the chancellors of God, had come to enforce the truth that there were rights that states must keep or they shall suffer for their sins. Victor Hugo says of Napoleon at Waterloo: "For Bonaparte to be conqueror at Waterloo was not in the law of the nineteenth century. . . . When the earth is suffering from a surcharge there are mysterious moanings from the deeps that the heavens hear. Napoleon had been impeached before the Infinite and his fall was decreed. He vexed God. Waterloo is not a battle; it is the change of front of the universe." So the Slave-Power had overleaped itself, and could no longer resist the advance of a more enlightened Christian civilization.

Abraham Lincoln was the divinely-appointed man for the hour. There seem to be certain superhuman adjustments that



philosophy does not explain, that work out righteous results. Human wisdom does not foresee them; they do not destroy human freedom, but they do achieve their results with infallible certainty. The leaders of such events are like Æneas in the fable: they are often covered with a cloud woven by divine fingers, and men do not see them. But when they are needed the cloud breaks away, and they stand before the world prepared to do their work. Such a man was Abraham Lincoln. He was called to lead in a war made holy by the quickened moral conscience of the nation. Poets, and reformers, and statesmen had cast up the highway for the King, who should visit the nation with chastening. This judgment day was at hand, because Phillips, and Garrison, and Sumner had come; because Whittier, and Lowell, and Harriett Beecher Stowe had come; because Lincoln, and Seward, and Chase had come; because Grant, and Sherman, and Sheridan had come; because the great and terrible day of the Lord had come!

## INDEX

- Agricultural society organized, 172.  
 Alling, D. D., 49, 152, 156, 243, 245.  
 Amusements, village, 133.  
 Andrus, Isaac, 246.  
 Articles of Confederation, 4.  
 Atlantic cable celebration, 357.  
 Attorneys, city, 316.  
 Atwater, Caleb, 12.
- Baker, Col. Edward D., 207.  
 Baker, Hon. E. H., 122-123, 347.  
 Baker, Henry N., 123.  
 Baker, Ira, 92, 122, 123.  
 Bauditti of the Frontier, 174-187.
- BANKS:**  
 Briggs, Spafford & Penfield, 123, 331.  
 Dickerman, Wheeler & Co., 49, 331.  
 E. H. Potter & Co., 331.  
 Fuller & Tomkins, 331.  
 Horsman's Bank, 317, 331.  
 Kitchel, Edward N., 331.  
 Lane, Sanford & Co., 49, 235.  
 Robertson & Holland, 331.  
 Spafford, Clark & Ellis, 331.  
 Winnebago National Bank, 355.
- Barbour, O. F., 343.  
 Barnard, D. A., 340.  
 Barnum, Anson, 38, 86, 100, 155.  
 Barnum, Daniel, 129.  
 Barnum, Ezra, 38, 86, 87.  
 Barnum, Harris, 129-130.  
 Baume, Rev. James, 73.  
 Beattie, John, 49, 144, 159, 246.  
 Beattie, Misses 10, 49.  
 Bebb, Gov., trial of, 358-359.  
 Beers, Daniel, 38, 69, 71, 100.  
 Bertrand & Sames, 324.  
 Big Thunder, 34, 111.  
 Births, first, 76.  
 Black Hawk, 16-21.  
 Black Hawk War, 14, 16-21, 63.  
 Black, Ike, 45, 46.  
 Blackmer, O. C., 342.  
 Blackstone, E. S., 104, 131, 185, 237.  
 Blaisdell, E. W., 218-219.  
 Blake School, 31.  
 Blake, Thatcher, 27, 31, 36, 63, 87, 106.  
 Blake, Mrs. Thatcher, 31, 43.  
 Blair, John, 353.  
 Blakeman, Benjamin, 363.  
 Blinn, Jesse, 313, 322, 333.  
 Boilvin, Nicholas, 58, 59.
- Boswell, James, 36.  
 Brett, Mrs. Carrie, 126, 244, 356.
- BRIDGES:**  
 First Rockford, 231-233.  
 Second Rockford, 314.  
 Bridge tax levy, 233.  
 Briggs, C. C., 337, 354.  
 Bruckerhoff, Geo. W., 29, 48, 62, 70, 78, 88, 189, 244, 245.  
 Brown, Andrew, 103, 104.  
 Brown, E. W., 276.  
 Brown, Eunice, 87, 88.  
 Brown, Horace, 340.  
 Brown, Judge Thomas, 100, 159, 185, 242, 263.  
 Brown, Judge William, 130, 276-277.  
 Bundy, H. W., 85.  
 Bundy & Goodhue, 85.  
 Burnap, Francis, 120, 157, 167, 168, 171, 194, 213, 251, 354.  
 Burhoe, Rev. J. T., 377.  
 Burns, Michael, 246, 371.  
 Bushnell, Horace, 95, 96.  
 Butterworth, Thomas, 349, 365-366.
- Campbell, John, murder of, 177.  
 Campbell, Thompson, 101.  
 Carrico, T. W., 50.  
 Catlin, Dr. A. M., 107-109, 229.  
 Catlin, Dr. E. P., 47, 303.  
 Catlin, Mrs. E. P., 93, 283.  
 Cemeteries, 151-153.  
 Census, County, first, 53.  
 Census, resume, 357.  
 Census, Village, first, 148.  
 Chaney, Ralph, 175, 176, 177, 179, 181.  
 Charivari fatality, 358.  
 Charters, Rockford, 314-315.  
 Charters, Royal, 1.  
 Chase, Salmon P., 357.  
 Chetlain, Mrs., 92, 228.
- CHURCHES:**  
 Baptist, First, 138-147.  
 Baptist, State Street, 376-377.  
 Catholic, St. James, 369-370.  
 Christian, 373.  
 Congregational, First, 87-96.  
 Congregational, Second, 306-312.  
 Episcopal, 284-286.  
 Lutheran, First Swedish, 372-373.  
 Methodist, Court Street, 368-369.  
 Methodist, First, 68-74.

## CHURCHES—continued.

Methodist, Third Street, 375-376.  
 Methodist, Winnebago Street, 374.  
 Presbyterian, First, 370-372.  
 Presbyterian, Westminster, 373-374.  
 Unitarian, 194-200.  
 Universalist, 229-230.  
 Church, Samuel I., 93, 351..  
 Church, Judge S. M., 29, 38, 41, 50,  
 62, 132, 167, 168, 171, 191, 226,  
 239, 241, 249, 264, 354.  
 Church, Mrs. S. M., 87, 238.  
 Churchill, P. P., 38.  
 Circuit courts, first, 100.  
 City tax levies, 316.  
 Claim fights, 76-80.  
 Clark, Dr. D. S., 275, 303.  
 Clark, Dr. Dexter, 275, 331.  
 Clark, George Rogers, 2, 3.  
 Clark, Rev. Ichabod, 144, 145.  
 Clark, Dr. Lucius, 274-275, 291.  
 Clark, Dr. L. A., 275.  
 Clark, Orlando, 224, 234, 322.  
 Clary, Rev. Dexter, 295, 308.  
 Clay, Henry, 45, 258, 317.  
 Clerks, city, 315.  
 Coleman, John S., 279, 310, 334-335.  
 Colton, A., 192, 193, 218.  
 Commercial Block, 359.  
 Commissioners' court, 55, 58, 154,  
 157, 164, 201.  
 Conant, Rev. A. H., 197-199, 287.  
 Conick, W. G., 101, 215.  
 Conick, Mrs. William, 50.  
 Constitution of 1818, 55, 261.  
 Constitutional convention of 1848,  
 264.  
 Corey, Alonzo, 163, 236.  
 Corwin, Tom, 197, 358-359.  
 Cospier, Elias, 197, 339.  
 Cotton, Robert H., 50.  
 Cotton, Mrs. Robert H., 50 312.  
 County commissioners, 54, 58.  
 County divided, 81.  
 County jail, first, 156.  
 County jail, brick, 159.  
 County officers made elective, 201.  
 County seat contest, 154-159.  
 County seat located, 58.  
 Countryman, Alfred, execution of, 351.  
 Court house, first, 70, 88, 89, 101.  
 Crawford, S. P., 145.  
 Crews, Rev. Hooper, 73, 351.  
 Crime, first, 75.  
 Croly, David G., 220.  
 Crosby, Asa, 87, 92, 100.  
 Cross, Robert J., 39, 53, 54, 55, 57,  
 84, 121, 172, 191, 264.  
 Cunningham Brothers, 124-125.  
 Cunningham, I. N., 29, 43, 136, 156,  
 172, 194.  
 Cunningham, William, 103, 156.  
 Curtis, Prof. E. L., 90.

Curtis, G. W., 200, 327.  
 Curtis, Rev. W. S., 90, 251.

Dacotas, 11.  
 Dam, first, 222-224.  
 Davenport, Col., 16, 184, 187.  
 Davis, Jefferson, 15, 108, 337.  
 Dennett, G. H., 366.  
 Dennis, W. P., 47, 86, 168.  
 Dickerman, W. A., 91, 235-236, 240.  
 Reminiscences of, 235-247.  
 Dickerman, Mrs. W. A., 113.  
 Dixon, John, 212.  
 Doty, Simon P., 54.  
 Douglas, Stephen A., 76, 160, 161,  
 250, 262, 263, 330, 360-361.  
 Dow, Daniel, 144, 158, 169-170, 242.  
 Driscolls, the, 174-181.  
 Drummond, Thomas, 101, 242, 263,  
 322.  
 Dunbar, William E., 38, 54, 55, 67, 76,  
 163, 168, 239.  
 Early, Hon. John, 335-336.  
 Ebbert, John, 271.  
 Edwards, John, 116, 280.  
 ELECTIONS:  
 County, first, 54.  
 Precinct, 56.  
 Previous to 1850, 201-207.  
 Of 1852-53, 319-320.  
 Of 1856, 356.  
 Of 1860, 379.  
 Ellis, Col. E. F. W., 336.  
 Ellsworth, Col. E. E., 356-357.  
 Ely, Rev. B. E. S., 90, 372.  
 Emerson, Prof. Joseph, 94, 334.  
 Emerson, Rev. Joseph, 309-310.  
 Emerson, Ralph, 322, 323, 334.  
 Emerson, Mrs. Ralph, 334.  
 Enoch, Abraham I., 39, 131, 320.  
 Enoch, Henry, 69, 100.  
 Enoch, Mary, 69.  
 Enoch, H. R., 43.  
 Fair, first, 172-173.  
 Farnsworth, Hon. J. F., 191.  
 Farwell, Seth B., 100, 181.  
 Ferguson, Duncan, 120-121, 145, 190.  
 Ferguson, Samuel, 340.  
 Ferry, 60, 61-62.  
 Fisher, Henry, 46.  
 Fisher, John, 62.  
 Foote Brothers, 107-108.  
 Foote, Rev. Hiram, 293.  
 Forbes, A. D., 339.  
 Forbes, Duncan, 324, 339.  
 Forbes, Geo. R., 116, 246, 340.  
 Fire department, 316.  
 Floats, Indian, 13, 14, 29, 41, 59, 77.  
 Ford, Thomas H., 16, 53, 166, 167,  
 175, 181, 262.  
 Forty-niners, 283.



Foundry, first, 233-234.  
 Fraley, John, 367.  
 Fraternities, 347-348.  
 Freeman, Henry, 342-343.  
 French, Irvin, 88.  
 French occupancy of Illinois, 1, 2.  
 Frink, Walker & Co., 99, 102, 103, 182, 237, 242.  
 Fuller, Arthur, 287.  
 Fuller, Margaret, 33, 197, 200, 287.  
 Fuller, Gen. Allen C., 242, 378-379.

Galena alien case, 261.  
 Gas Light and Coke Company, 349.  
 Geological survey, 6-9.  
 George, Sampson, 42, 75, 284.  
 Gibson, Allen, 354.  
 Giddings, Joshua R., 333.  
 Gipsy steamboat, 114-115.  
 Gleason, H. W., 100.  
 Goodall, Blanche, 96.  
 Goodhue, Geo., 85.  
 Goodhue, Dr. J. C., 40, 63, 66, 85, 109, 110-112, 148, 163, 168, 173, 188, 189.  
 Goodrich, Dr., 45.  
 Goodwin, Dr. A. E., 337.  
 Goodwin, Rev. H. M., 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 227, 294.  
 Gorham, M. L., 365.  
 Grand jury, first, 100.  
 Grant, U. S., 160, 379.  
 Greeley, Horace, 197, 327-328.  
 Gregory, Eliphalet, 36, 54, 71.  
 Gregory, Joanna, 69.  
 Gregory, L. B., 170, 223, 275.  
 Gregory, Samuel, 36, 37, 69, 71, 72, 100, 271.  
 Griggs, Joseph P., 53, 54, 57.

Haight, D. S., 35-36, 47, 54, 55, 60, 63, 66, 67, 70, 85, 86, 88, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 148, 155, 167, 171, 189, 213, 214, 215, 281.

Haines, Anthony, 129, 338.

Hale, Dr. H. B., 366.

Hale, John P., 317.

Hall, Alonzo, 191.

Hall, John H., 363.

Hall school, 363.

#### HALLS:

Metropolitan, 126, 358, 359.

Peake's, 129.

Warner's, 196, 371.

Hard, Giles C., 62, 99.

Hard winter, the, 171.

Harper, Derastus, 156, 158, 159, 214, 231, 232.

Haskell, George, 36, 86, 114-117, 138, 139, 156, 158, 167, 172, 214, 246, 247, 289.

Haskell, Rev. Samuel, 114, 117, 145.

Hatch, Rufus, 93.

Hazlett, Jacob, 340.

Hempstead, Chas. S., 29, 164, 263, 289.

Henry, Patrick, 3.

Herrick family, 125-126.

Hitchcock, Jonathan, 105.

Hitt, Hon. R. R., 256, 331, 361.

Holland, John A., 111, 121, 187, 191, 239, 279, 349.

Holland, H. P., 345, 349.

Ho-no-ne-gah, 22-25.

Hood, D. N., 364.

#### HOTELS:

American House, 70, 101, 104.

Brown's Cottage, 104.

City, 316.

Eagle, 104.

Holland House, 355-356.

Inn, The 104.

Log Tavern, 104.

Rockford House, 100, 103, 148, 162, 172, 173, 174, 252.

Rock River House, 104.

Union, 104.

Washington House, 252.

Waverly, 104.

Winnebago House, 136, 171, 241, 242, 246, 252.

Horsman, C. I., 42, 97, 133, 144, 156, 158, 168, 172, 173, 188, 191, 192, 231, 241.

Horsman, Mrs., 42, 241.

Hough, D. S., 366.

Houghton, Bethuel, 43, 86.

Howell, Daniel, 103, 157, 192, 231.

Howell, J. B., 144, 224, 273.

Howes, Phineas, 46, 127, 136, 185.

Hulin, William, 24, 129, 144, 158, 159, 191.

Huntington, C. A., 80, 129, 244, 275-276, 277, 289.

Hurlbut, Gen. Stephen A., 191, 242, 264, 265, 329, 330, 331.

Hydraulic company, 222-224.

Illinois, state, 5, 6.

Illinois, territory, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

Indiana, territory, 5, 17.

Irving, Washington, 250.

Jefferson, Joseph, 85.

Jefferson, Thomas, 4.

Jenks, Cyrus C., 86, 100.

Jennie June, 221.

Johnson, I. D., 271.

Journalists and Journalism, 215-221.

Keith, Adam, 38.

Kemble, J. C., 45, 97, 149, 188, 189.

Kemp, Joseph, 25.

Kent, Aratus, 36, 289, 291, 295.

Kent, Germanicus, 26-31, 48, 53, 54, 57, 61, 62, 63, 65, 66, 70, 86, 87, 88, 99, 103, 163, 167, 171, 208, 209, 211, 214, 244, 281.

- Kent, Lewis, 208-209.  
 Kerr, Dr. Thomas, 121, 146-147.  
 Keyt, David, 310, 354.  
 Kilburn, Benjamin, 50, 76.  
 Kilburn, Milton, 38.  
 Kimball, Henry P., 303, 336-337.  
 Kimball, Mrs. H. P., 117.  
 Kirk, E. A., 50, 129.  
 Kishwaukee, village, 105, 108.  
 Knapp, Rev. Jacob, 117, 139, 142-144.  
 Knowlton, W. A., 340.  
  
 Lake, John, 46-47.  
 Lake, Lewis F., 53.  
 Lake, Thomas, 36, 40, 46, 84, 86.  
 Land sale at Dixon, 213-214.  
 Lane, R. P., 235, 338.  
 LaSalle, 1, 2.  
 Lathrop, William, 313, 314, 335.  
 Latimer, Charles, 168, 171, 181, 282.  
 Lawler, Thomas G., 96, 199, 228.  
 Leach, Shepherd, 123, 124, 251, 252.  
 Leavitt's town plat, 214.  
 Lecture courses, 1853-1860, lectures  
   by E. P. Whipple, Horace Mann,  
   Geo. W. Curtis, Horace Greeley, Bay-  
   ard Taylor, Ralph Waldo Emerson,  
   J. G. Saxe, James Russell Lowell,  
   and others, 326-328.  
 Lee, Geo. W., 105, 172, 188, 189.  
 Leetown, 105.  
 Lincoln, Abraham, 21, 108, 160, 161,  
   202, 228, 262, 322-324, 334, 356,  
   378-80.  
  
 Lincoln-Douglas debate, 360-361.  
 Logan, John A., 160, 330.  
 London Company, 1.  
 Loomis, H. W., 44, 243.  
 Loomis, Nathaniel, 41, 44.  
 Loop, James L., 111, 163, 185, 186,  
   242, 330, 335.  
 Loss, Rev. Lewis H., 91, 92, 94, 289,  
   293.  
 Lovejoy, Rev. Elijah P., 116, 280, 361.  
 Lowell, James Russell, 200, 328.  
 Lowry, A. G., 340.  
 Lyceum, 168.  
 Lyon, Isaiah, 114, 136, 138, 139, 148,  
   149, 156, 250.  
  
 Mack, Stephen, 20, 22-25, 63.  
 McKenney robbery, 182.  
 Mail, first, 98.  
 Maine temperance law, 349.  
 Manlove, J. G., 338.  
 Manny, F. H., 325, 366.  
 Manny, J. H., 321-324.  
 Manny, Mrs. J. H., 324.  
 Manny, John P., 325, 340.  
 Manny-McCormick suit, 322-324.  
 Manny mansion, 353.  
 Manufacturers, 1850-1860, 324-325.  
  
 Marriages, first, 75.  
 Marsh, Jason, 91, 94, 118-120, 126,  
   157, 163, 168, 173, 179, 181, 185,  
   186, 191, 192, 238, 252, 289.  
 Marsh school, 342.  
 Marsh, Volney A., 93, 171.  
 Martyn, James B., 36, 65, 71, 85, 100,  
   174.  
 Maynard, H. R., 50, 239, 243, 244.  
 Mayors, 315.  
 Midway, 65, 66.  
 Mile-strip contest, 81-83.  
 Miller, Anson S., 157, 168, 169, 171,  
   185, 187, 206, 246, 289, 355.  
 Miller, Asher, 62, 238, 308.  
 Miller, C. F., 152, 168, 169, 171, 185,  
   187, 246.  
 Miller, D., 367.  
 Miller, Horace, 70, 71, 130, 163, 172,  
   181.  
 Miller, Jacob, 104, 181, 189.  
 Miller, John, 50.  
 Miller, Orrin, 169.  
 Mitchell, Rev. E. C., 140, 377.  
 Mitchell, James, 100, 148, 159, 251.  
 Molony, Dr., 250.  
 Montague, Richard, 38, 152, 172, 194.  
 Montague school, 38.  
 Morgan, Abiram, 29, 41, 138, 139,  
   156, 241, 251.  
 Morgan, Mrs., 41, 241, 251.  
 Morrill family, 87.  
 Morrill, Rev. John, 49, 87, 88.  
 Moulthrop, Dr. L., 37, 163, 284.  
 Moulthrop, L., 277, 284, 285, 317.  
 Moundbuilders, 10, 11.  
 Mulford robbery, 183-184.  
 Myott, Catherine, 14, 59.  
  
 Navigation Rock river, 188-191.  
 Nelson, John, 337.  
 Nevius, Col. Garrett, 363.  
 Newburg, 105.  
 New England influence, 253-256.  
 Northwest Territory, 4, 5, 163.  
 Norton, Rev. O. W., 90.  
  
 Oliver, Charles, 103, 174, 185, 186.  
 Ordinance 1787, 4, 296.  
 Patriotic celebration, first, 97.  
 Peake, Laomi, Sr., 128-129, 157, 237.  
 Penfield, David S., 93, 123, 213, 251.  
 Penfield, J. G., 123, 339.  
 Penfield, Mrs. J. G., 339.  
 Penfield, S. F., 342, 366.  
 Penfield, William, 86, 97.  
 Perry, Seely, 46, 47, 277, 303, 315,  
   333, 345, 352, 353.  
 Perry, Mrs. Marie T., 294.  
 Peters, William, 50.  
 Phelps, John, 25.  
 Phillips, Wendell, 253-254.  
 Pioneer (locomotive), 271.



Pioneers of 1838, 130.  
 Pioneers, previous to 1840, 38-39, 50, 130.  
 Pioneers, trials of, 131-133.  
 Plank road, 191.  
 Platt, John, 50, 115, 116, 243.  
 Plymouth Company, 1.  
 Polish Claims, 149, 210-214.  
 Political reminiscences, 201-107, 329-331.  
 Pope, Nathaniel, 5, 162, 164, 165.  
 Porter, Rev. Lansing, 90, 252, 308, 353.  
 Porter, John R., 366.  
 Posson, family, 43.  
 Postmaster, first, 98.  
 Postmasters of Rockford, 226-228.  
 Pottawatomies, 22, 34, 111, 170.  
 Potter, E. H., 48, 87, 92, 100, 101, 157, 213, 231, 232, 237, 289, 291, 313.  
 Potter, H. B., 40, 87, 98, 107, 108, 238.  
 Potter, Joel B., 92, 125, 131, 173, 238.  
 Potter & Preston, 45.  
 Precincts created, 56.  
 Presiding elders, roster of, 74.  
 Preston, Samuel D., 48, 87, 101, 149, 167.  
 Public library, first, 344-345.

## RAILROADS:

Galena & Chicago Union, 266-272.  
 Chicago & Northwestern, 272.  
 Kenosha & Rockford, 352-353.  
 Rockford Central, 348.  
 Railroad convention, 267-268.  
 Rawlins, John A., 378-379.  
 Reed, Charles, 58, 59, 60, 155, 247.  
 Reed, Rev. D. M., 199.  
 Reform of Judiciary, 260.  
 Regan, M. H., 71, 249, 273.  
 Rhoades, Levi, 367.  
 Rib-town, 104.  
 Richings, Dr. C. H., 42-43.  
 River and harbor convention, 257-259.  
 Robertson, Thomas D., 121-122, 157, 158, 163, 168, 171, 185, 237, 239, 279, 289.  
 Robinson, Sylvester, 283.  
 Rockford's attitude toward repudiation of state debt, 166-167.  
 Rockford City Greys, 356.  
 Rockford houses in 1838, 134-136.  
 Rockford, incorporated as a city, 313.  
 Rockford seminary, 287-295.  
 Rock River Baptist Association, organized, 140.  
 Rock River conference, 68-74.  
 Rock River Medical Association, 283.  
 Rock River Mutual Insurance Co., 332.  
 Rodd, Joseph, 224, 324.  
 Roe, Rev. C. H. 146, 287.

Rose, Benjamin A., 274.  
 Rowland, William L., 345, 362.  
 Rowland, William M., 362.  
 Rowley, Isaac, 88.  
 Saes and Foxes, 16, 17.  
 Sackett, C. T., 367.  
 Sanford, Albert, 36, 243, 251.  
 Sanford, Clara G., 10, 96.  
 Sanford, G. A., 49, 84, 115, 116, 136, 159, 167, 185, 214, 231, 235, 239, 243, 251, 310.  
 Sanford, Robert, 251.  
 Sayre, James, 105.  
 Schools, free public, 1855-'61, 341-343.  
 School funds, 297-300.  
 School houses and teachers, early, 300-303.  
 Scipio, 104, 155.  
 Scott, Gen. 14, 19.  
 Scott, Sir Walter, 250, 363.  
 Searles, H. D., 104, 128.  
 Seccomb, J. W., 277.  
 Secession convention, Rockford, 162.  
 Secession from Illinois, proposed, 160-165.  
 Seminary at Kishwaukee, 107-108.  
 Seventy-fourth regiment, 119.  
 Shaw, Bela, 130, 233, 236, 237, 289.  
 Shaw, C. A., 354, 366.  
 Sheldon, C. W., 265, 338-339.  
 Sheldon, Judge, 351.  
 Sheldon, Porter, 265.  
 Sherratt, Harriott Wight, 86, 118.  
 Sherratt, John H., 60.  
 Shumway family, 43-44.  
 Silk culture, 247.  
 Sill, Anna P., 94, 289, 290, 291, 292-295.  
 Silsby, H. H., 45, 114, 136-137, 234.  
 Skinner, Dea., 92, 246.  
 Smith, Abraham E., 228.  
 Smith, Melanethon, 227-228.  
 Social life in the early forties, 248-252.  
 Sons of Temperance, 344.  
 Southgate, J. M., 120, 340.  
 Southgate, Volney, 120.  
 Sovereign, I., 367.  
 Spafford, Amos Catlin, 91, 127, 224.  
 Spafford, Charles H., 126, 171, 185, 226, 227, 228, 249, 290, 320, 352.  
 Spafford, Mrs. Charles H., 103, 126, 171, 249, 251.  
 Spafford, John, 127, 359.  
 Spaulding, D. A., 44, 54, 55, 57, 66, 67, 79, 87.  
 Squier, John F., 345.  
 Stage barn, 70, 88, 102.  
 Stage coach, 102-103.  
 Starr, Melanethon, 196, 278-280.  
 State roads, 63.  
 Stillman's Run, 19, 108, 109.  
 Stone, Judge, Dan, 100, 261.



- Sunday at the ferry, 245.  
 Swedish emigrants, first, 332.  
 Sweasy, Rev. Lewis, 107.  
 Sumner, E. B., 52, 106.  
 Sumner, Ephraim, 39, 52, 56, 105, 131.  
 Surveys, first, 66.  
 Sweet, M. P., 101, 163, 185, 187, 242.  
 Taggart, Hon. A., 343.  
 Talcott, Henry, 39, 367.  
 Talcott, Sylvester, 56, 75, 322, 334, 367.  
 Talcott, Thomas B., 39, 54, 267, 367.  
 Talcott, William, 39, 367.  
 Talcott, William A., 334.  
 Taylor, Bayard, 197, 347.  
 Taylor, H. W., 364-365.  
 Taylor, James, 62.  
 Taylor, John F., 350-351.  
 Taylor, John W., 152, 156, 163, 171, 245, 251.  
 Taylor, Zachary, 21.  
 Tax levy, first, 83-84.  
 Telegraph line reaches Rockford, 356.  
 Temperance society, first, 150.  
 Thompson, N. C., 325, 340, 365.  
 Thomas, Dr. Alden, 112-113, 158, 235, 241.  
 Thomas, Dr. H. W., 74.  
 Thurston, Henry, 47, 97, 100, 103, 214.  
 Thurston, John H., 32, 34, 35, 47, 66, 98, 103, 131, 182, 215, 249.  
 Ticknor, J. S., 348.  
 Tinker, Robert H., 86, 345, 363.  
 Tinker, William H., 85.  
 Todd, L. H., 366.  
 Toms, Isaac, 50.  
 Townsend, W. H., 93, 366.  
 Township organization, 304.  
 Trahern, W. D., 324, 367.  
 Treaty of Paris (1763), 2; (1783), 3, 4.  
 Treaties, Indian, 12-14, 17, 59, 77.  
 Trowbridge, L. A., 273.  
 Trowbridge, Mrs. M. T., 86.  
 Tullock, George, 170.  
 Twelve-Mile Grove, 65, 78, 79, 103, 105, 109, 242.  
 Twogood, Sidney, 36, 40, 84, 86, 102.  
 Twogood, William, 50.  
 Udell, Grant B., 171, 187.  
 Upton, C. O., 338.  
 Utter, Isaac, 234, 322, 339.  
 Vance, John, 86.  
 Vanceborough, 105, 106.  
 Vanhorne, Rev. G. R., 68.  
 Village plats, 104-106.  
 Village of Rockford incorporated, 148.  
 Vincent, Bishop, 68, 69.  
 Virginia, 1, 2, 3, 4.  
 Voters, first election, roster of, 54-55.  
 Waldo, Hiram H., 91, 92, 235, 252, 277-278, 330.  
 Waldo, Lorenzo D., 373.  
 Wallis, W. T., 93.  
 Walton, Rev. J. E., 286, 312.  
 Warner, Lyman F., 278.  
 Washburne, Elihu R., 242, 319-320, 322, 329, 330, 331, 354-355, 360.  
 Water-power company, 321.  
 Warren, Edward, 171, 226.  
 Waterman, John D., 228.  
 Watson, Rev. Cyrus L., 89, 90.  
 Watson, Peter H., 233, 322.  
 Webster, Daniel, 20, 45, 317.  
 Weldon, Jonathan, 80, 172, 285.  
 Wentworth, John, 101, 110, 188, 215, 216, 257.  
 Wesleyan seminary, 346.  
 West, L. M., 363-364.  
 Wheeler, B. G., 227, 235, 290.  
 Wheeler, Willard, 71, 124, 213, 231, 239, 313.  
 Whitman, Rev. S. S., 138, 140, 141, 142, 250.  
 Whitney, Daniel, 29.  
 Whitney, Dr. Daniel H., 53, 54, 59, 75, 76, 98, 163, 202, 264.  
 Whittier, John G., 115.  
 Wight, J. Ambrose, 97, 217-218.  
 Wight, James M., 118, 157, 168, 185, 191, 194, 229, 238.  
 Wight, Miss Mary, 118.  
 Wight school, 118.  
 Wilcox, Rev. W. T., 374.  
 Wilder, Nathaniel, 48.  
 Williams, Charles, 315, 362.  
 Williams, Charles L., 25, 364, 375.  
 Winnebagoes, 10-15, 19, 34, 59.  
 Winnebago county organized, 51-57.  
 Winnebago village, 58, 59, 60, 61, 108, 154, 155.  
 Winters, John D., 99, 103.  
 Woodruff, Gilbert, 48, 69, 364.  
 Works, Charles, 87.  
 Worthington, William, 128, 229, 237.  
 Wyman, Ephraim, 37, 86, 148, 152, 156, 194, 214, 233, 244, 279.  
 Yates, Richard, 160, 379.  
 Young Men's Association, 326-328, 344.  
 Young Men's Christian Association, 103, 215, 374-375.

## ERRATA.

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On page 50, the name Henry Maynard should read Hiram R. Maynard.

On page 66 it is stated that Charles B. Farwell succeeded John A. Logan in the United States senate in 1886. It should read, in 1887.

On pages 163, 185, and 242, James M. Loop should read James L. Loop.

In the last line of the first paragraph on page 43, the name Dr. C. H. Richings should read Dr. Henry Richings. Also on page 129, in the paragraph on William Hulin, the same substitution of the two names should be made.

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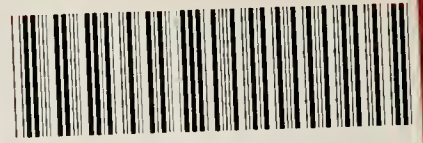
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